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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to improve preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers' group decision making skills in order to encourage program continuity from grade to grade in schools in a culturally diverse metropolitan area. A second aim was to use shared skill building to reduce isolation and improve problem solving among preschool and child care staff. A pre- and post-test training survey, and a 2.5 hour training session in group decision making skills, were targeted to 11 preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers, and one principal, at two schools. These activities identified participants' skills and attitudes toward group decision making skills. Original plans for an outside consultant to serve as a facilitator for future meetings were not implemented. However, training session participants incorporated the new skills into regular school meetings and other informal communications. Follow-up interviews with principals indicated that the skills used in group decision making were being applied. Appended materials include: early childhood survey results; articulated childhood education (ACE) pilot evaluation interview results; an implementation calendar; a pre-training survey; a post-training survey and principal interview; an agenda for decision making skill building for teams; lists of training activities and handouts; ideas on barriers to articulation; and the practicum implementation log. Contains 77 references. (LB)

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Improving Teacher Articulation to Increase Program Continuity Preschool Through First Grade

by

Barbara A. Malaspina

Cluster 33

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A Practicum I Report presented to the Ed.D. Program in
Early and Middle Childhood
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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Barbara A. Malaspina under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

May 28, 1991
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ABSTRACT

Improving Teacher Articulation to Increase Program Continuity Preschool Through First Grade. Malaspina, Barbara A., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Participative Decision Making/ Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education/ Cooperation/ Effective Schools/Isolation (Professional) /Teacher Participation/ School Based Management/Educational Cooperation/ Program Effectiveness

This practicum was designed to improve preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers group decision making skills to enable articulation to occur more frequently and comfortably to encourage program continuity from grade to grade for children. A second aim was to reduce teacher isolation through shared skill building and focus on problem solving related to barriers to articulation.

The writer used a pre and post training survey, follow up interviews of principals, and two and one half hour training targeted to preschool, kindergarten and first grade teachers at two schools to determine previous skills and attitudes toward group decision making skills and improvement in articulation across the three grade levels.

Although facilitation was not provided as originally planned after the training, results indicated there was an increase in the number of teachers who identified an enlarged repetoire of group decision making skills, more connections being made informally and some formally between teachers at different levels, increase in awareness that teachers themselves could do something about improving articulation across grade levels.

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May 26,1991 Barbara A. Malaspina
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Description of Work Setting and Community

A twenty school district serving 13,000 students, preschool through twelfth grade, plus an adult education program with 14,000 adult students and 750 children birth to age five, in a metropolitan area of a Western state is the setting for this practicum. The school district closed fifteen schools in the ten years between 1972 and 1982 resulting in few new hires until 1985. Due to the decline, the age of the teaching staff is older with many teachers nearing retirement. During the declining enrollment years, as student numbers dropped, some teachers were re-assigned to grade levels for which they were not given nor did they have specific training.

The population of the schools has changed with substantial increases in multi-lingual, multi-ethnic students. During the past few years, as many as forty-six different spoken languages have been represented within the student population. As with many other Western metropolitan areas, the community is shifting from a white majority to a minorities as the majority.

The family structure in the community and the school district have also undergone changes with increased numbers of single parent and two parent-working families. The costs for housing have escalated in recent years contributing to the need for both parents to work and straining the resources of single parents. The school district serves primarily middle and lower middle class families. As more mothers have gone to work, an increasing demand for child care has been felt in the community and the school district. Many families continue to use extended family, friends, and family home care providers for child care, while others qualify for district preschool programs and schoolage child care.

Within the school district the status and classification held by preschool and child care teachers and that of kindergarten and first grade teachers differ. District preschool settings include special education preschool classes, state funded preschool classes for low income children, preschool child care settings, adult education-parent education classes for parents and their preschool children, and a cooperative nursery school which is partially subsidized by adult education. Credentials for preschool teachers include special education certification, children's center permits,early childhood specialization credentials, elementary education credentials with additional child development coursework, adult education multiple subjects credentials authorizing parent education with training in preschool. The attitude held by most district staff is that the kindergarten through twelfth grade (K - 12) is the "real system" while all other programs are alternative education and have less status.

In the last five years, as the district has begun to hire new teachers at elementary grades, there has been some disparity in philosophy between the older, veteran teachers and the younger, less experienced teachers. Older teachers have seen innovations come and go and, as they near retirement, seem less ready to invest energies in change. Younger teachers have joined veteran staff at school sites where many older teachers have remained throughout their teaching careers; the younger teachers may have had very different teacher preparation than have their colleagues.

In 1988, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed a State Readiness Task Force which has since made recommendations for educational program improvements for four through six year olds. Task Force members have been available to school districts to share the research and recommendations.

The school district established an Early Childhood Committee in January, 1989, made up of preschool, kindergarten, first and second grade teachers, district and site level administrators, and parents to review the State Readiness Task Force report, to look at the district, and to make recommendations to the district school board for early childhood changes. The Early Childhood Committee has fourteen members. In the district there are 110 teachers who are in classrooms at preschool through first grade levels.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

As the one district person with comprehensive early childhood experience and expertise as both teacher and administrator, as a participant on a national level in early childhood efforts, and with experience in working with adult learners, the author has served as chairperson of the Early Childhood Committee and has a limited role as resource and consultant to the district for early childhood staff development, training, and program development. The author's responsibilities as committee chairperson included providing a description of current conditions in the district related to early childhood, the work of various subcommittees examining curriculum, staff development, student assessment, parent involvement, surveys of early childhood teachers, and a grant funded pilot at four schools to try out some strategies to encourage preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers to begin to share common staff development experiences and follow-up meetings, and leading the Early Childhood Committee to develop recommendations for early childhood in the district to give to the school board.

CHAPTER II

Study of the Problem

Problem Description

The district programs, preschool through first grade, vary in philosophy, goals, and instruction so that experiences for children look different from one setting to the next. Over the last 15 years, the elementary schools have evolved so there are two district alternative schools -- a back to basics school and an open education school, and the rest of the elementary schools' classrooms, while more eclectic, are quite distinct from one another and represent the breadth of the philosophical spectrum. Teachers at the same grade level in the same school may hold divergent educational and instructional philosophies; the continuity from the previous grade level to the current and subsequent levels is haphazard or non-existent for the student.

In addition to varying philosophies, scheduling differences for preschool, kindergarten, and first grades at each site, staff professional experience and training differences, and general isolation of teachers to their own classrooms hamper joint planning across grade levels. Governance of preschool and child care classrooms is shared between district level administrators and school site principals further impeding the smooth articulation at the school site level. Not all children in the local attendance area qualify for child care or preschool classes, so some four year olds in the school attendance area do not become part of the school until kindergarten and may or may not attend private or non-profit preschools and child care in the community. Children attending adult education parent-child parent education preschool or the cooperative nursery school, while being served in district programs, do not attend programs situated on elementary school sites, so limited articulation occurs with district kindergarten teachers for these children who will be dispersed throughout district schools the following year.

The acceptance of preschool/child care as an integral part of the elementary school seems dependent on the type of preschool program and the particular staff at the school site. Much of the feeling of separateness relates to school staff identifying preschool and child care as part of alternative education, not part of "real school".

During the past year, in an attempt to look at ways of improving early childhood staff communication at the school site, grant funds were secured to provide staff development opportunities and coordination of follow-up meetings for four pilot elementary site preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers. Although teachers found the staff development worthwhile, the meeting together met with less success. Reasons for the lack of success with articulation in the pilot harken back to the conditions of early childhood teachers in the district: scheduling differences, philosophical differences, teacher isolation at grade level and between grade levels contributing to lower self-confidence in group settings and unwillingness to speak openly about differences, and experience and training variations. District kindergarten teachers as a grade level meet periodically to address kindergarten issues, but not all district kindergarten teachers participate nor support projects the group undertakes.

If the situation which currently exists in early childhood within the district were improved, children who move from district preschool programs into kindergarten and kindergarten into first grade would find more consistency in program philosophy, goals, and instruction. Teachers at the site level, preschool through first grade, would plan together, share activities, goals, philosophies, and instructional strategies to improve program continuity. Teachers preschool through first grade would be provided with staff development appropriate for the age of the children they teach. Teachers, no matter whether they were part of K -12 or part of alternative education, would consider each other as equals as they plan together.

Briefly stated, then, the problem addressed was limited teacher articulation across preschool through first grade levels, especially at the site level,increasing the discontinuity of the learning experiences for young children.

Problem Documentation

The State Readiness Task Force Report, *Here They Come, Ready or Not*, was shared with district management team and further with the principals according to the district Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Director of Elementary Education. As reported, the consensus of principals and district level administrators was that there is a gap between the Report's recommendations and what exists in the district.

Observations conducted by the author and others on the Early Childhood Committee of a sampling of site level classrooms, preschool through first grade, confirmed there was a discontinuity for children as they move from preschool to kindergarten and kindergarten to first grade. It was also noted that limited time was set aside at the site or the district level for articulation.

Parent reports during adult education parent education discussions following parents receiving materials on developmentally appropriate practices and parent visits to neighborhood kindergartens indicated the kindergartens were perceived to be quite different from the preschool program in which the parents and their four year old children participated (as reported to the author by the parent education preschool instructors). Each year beginning in January, parents of four year old preschoolers in parent education parent-child preschool classes become concerned about their children, the discrepancies between preschool and kindergarten, and successful transitions for their children between the two grade levels. Weekly discussions over the successive eight weeks center on helping parents identify their children's strengths and areas of concern, the techniques for observing kindergartens, and family decision-making strategies to lessen the discrepancies between preschool and kindergarten settings to boost their children's success in the transition process.

An Early Childhood Committee survey developed by a sub-committee comprised of preschool and kindergarten teachers, parent and administrator(the author), was conducted in April/May, 1989 with district preschool, kindergarten and first grade teachers. The survey was designed to assess current conditions at the three grade levels. Seventy teachers responded (out of approximately 110), 13 preschool, 28 kindergarten, and 29 first grade. Survey questions asked about practices, instruction, materials, schedules, facilities, training, parent involvement, articulation and staff development.(Appendix A)

Scheduling Differences Between Grade Levels

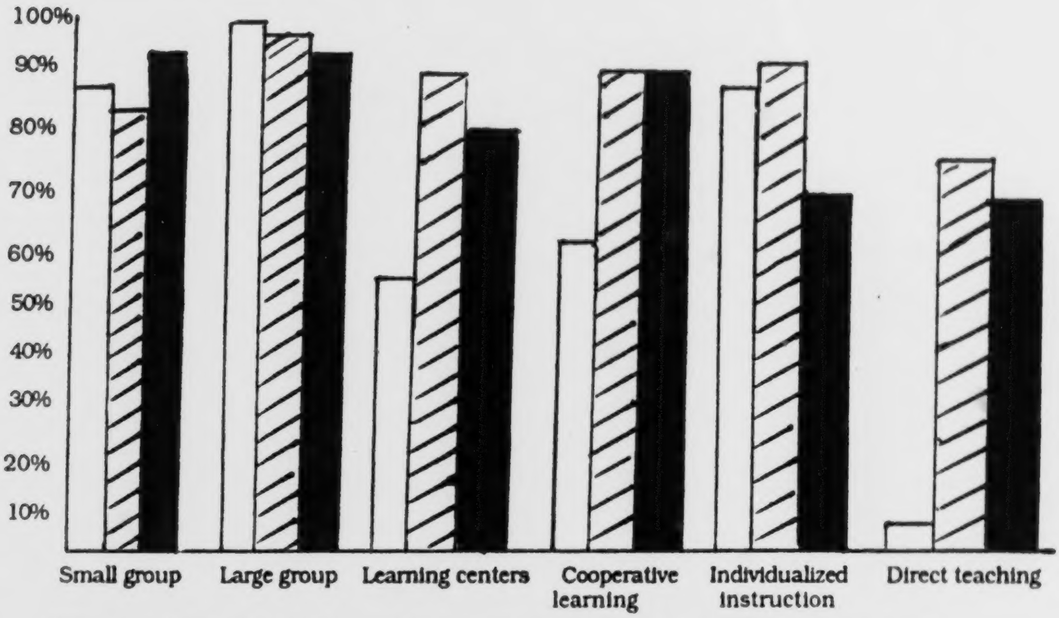
When teachers were asked about the beginning and ending times of their classes, the majority of preschool teachers listed 9:30 a. m. to 12:30 p. m. except for preschool child care teachers where the program runs from 6:30 a. m. to 6:00 p. m.; the kindergarten teachers listed 8:20 a. m. to 11:30 a. m. with some teachers reporting early and late group variations and minor differences due to bus schedules; and first grade teachers reported 8:40 a. m. to 2:35 p. m., again with minor differences because of bus scheduling. Obstacles for planning articulation activities across grade levels became apparent.

Instructional Differences Between Grade Levels

Teachers were asked if they provide time and materials for children to select their own activities as an attempt to identify some of the grade level and teacher differences. All preschool teachers and all kindergarten teachers stated they did provide time and materials for children to select their own activities. Of the first grade teachers, one stated, "no", one stated, "only on rare occasions", and 27 stated a qualified "yes, when assignments are completed".

The percentage of time used for the various teaching strategies also differed between the grade levels and also between teachers. In the preschool, learning centers, self-directed, small group or cooperative learning, were the primary strategies followed by some large group instruction. In the kindergarten, large group, small group and learning centers were the primary strategies followed by individualized. Cooperative learning and direct teaching were also used. It is interesting to note that ten kindergarten teachers use large group instruction 75% of the time and five indicated they use direct teaching up to 80% of the time. In first grade, teachers identified direct teaching/large group instruction as one of the major strategies although others used small group instruction as an alternative strategy.Only a small number use cooperative learning more than occasionally and no additional strategies were identified. Three of the 29 first grade teachers responding indicated they used direct teaching/ large group instruction as the only instructional strategy.(See Figure 1)

Figure 1. Teaching strategies employed by respondents, preschool through grade one



Key : Preschool is white column; kindergarten is patterned; first grade is black column

69% of first grade teachers use no further strategies; 23% of preschool teachers, 18% of kindergarten teachers, and 11% of first grade teachers use a variety of additional teaching strategies.

When asked if they used workbooks, preschool teachers responding said that "yes, they did" (15%), "no, they did not" (54%), or "they sometimes did" (31%). Of the kindergarten teachers responding, 71% used workbooks, 11% did not use workbooks, and 18% sometimes used workbooks. First grade teachers responding used workbooks (61%), 14% indicated they did not, and 24% responded they sometimes used workbooks. The comments provided proved interesting. Preschool teachers used workbooks, when they used them, for beginning letter writing. Kindergarten teachers used them in various forms and seemingly under duress, for example, "I only use them because they are bought for us; they are not essential to a kindergarten program." "The state and district provide them so I feel obligated." Many kindergarten teachers expressed dislike for using workbooks in their classrooms. In first grade, teachers used many workbooks to few workbooks and in varying ways both as supplemental and as independent seatwork.

Training in Early Childhood and Child Development

When asked if they had completed any early childhood/child development courses the teachers responded as follows:12 preschool teachers indicated yes and one no regarding abovementioned coursework; twenty kindergarten teachers stated affirmatively they had taken coursework, five indicated they had not, and three gave no response; of first grade teachers, 21 responded they had had early childhood coursework, three indicated they had not, and five gave no response. Many stated their coursework went back to their student teaching or they had had coursework years ago. Some stated the coursework they had taken was child psychology. Other than the preschool teachers who mentioned High/Scope training, none of the teachers mentioned district training.

When asked if there was interest in staff development in particular areas of early childhood and child development, the teachers provided the responses described in Table 1.

Table 1

Interest in Early Childhood Education and Child Development Staff Development

	Number of responses		
Staff development	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade
Child growth and development	6	14	8
Latest research/ trends	8	15	11
Classroom environments	7	12	17
Alternative teaching strategies/models	9	11	12

Staff Articulation Between Grade Levels, Preschool Through First Grade

When asked whether curriculum alignment provided smooth transitions between preschool and kindergarten and kindergarten and first grade, teachers responded in the following manner: nine preschool teachers, yes; one, no (and there were three no responses) related to the transition from preschool to kindergarten. For the same transition, 20 kindergarten teachers indicated yes, three equivocated, and three indicated no. Seven first grade teachers responded positively to preschool-kindergarten transition and three gave a "not applicable" response. Regarding kindergarten to first grade transition, one preschool teacher responded yes and nine responded negatively. Eighteen kindergarten teachers gave affirmative responses to kindergarten to first grade transitions,again two equivocated, and five gave negative responses. First grade teachers gave the following responses: 21 said smooth transitions, three gave negative responses and two stated it was not applicable. In the comments area, there was some locating of blame, some alluding to pressures from others, some sites where teachers are trying and others where there does not appear to be much continuity for children from level to level.

Another question asked if teachers felt the need for more articulation with the grade below and the grade above. Preschool teachers responded with nine stating "yes", and four stating "no".

Fifteen kindergarten teachers answered affirmatively and nine answered negatively (there were four no responses). Of the first grade teachers responding, 16 said " yes, they felt the need for more articulation", and 13 said " no, they did not feel the need for more articulation". The teachers went on to explain what did exist and what concerns they had about articulation.

The final question of the survey was an open-ended question asking what teachers would like to see happen as a result of the district's early childhood efforts. Teachers made many suggestions which included the following pertinent to the problem herein being addressed. Teachers mentioned wanting to see a curriculum continuum from preschool through first grade, the desire to work together toward the children's best interests, smooth transitions into the next higher grade, more sharing of ideas and information. Other teachers requested an improvement in all programs and more consistency between and among programs, greater articulation between grade levels and a change of some teachers' expectations and understanding of children and what is best for them. Teachers requested more staff development and training, and more school level and district level teacher communication.

Using an instrument developed by the author, interviews of the pilot site coordinators for the grant to implement the State Readiness Task Force recommendations indicated that teachers at some of the sites had difficulties transcending age, philosophy, experience level, and grade level differences when brought together to talk about implementing curriculum after staff development in developmentally appropriate curricula was provided to all the Articulated Childhood Education (ACE) pilot schools' participating teachers ; the grant took place during the 1989-90 school year at four sites with at least one teacher at each of the three grade levels, preschool through first grade, participating. Time to meet, desire to be paid for additional time for which the participants met, feelings of ownership of ideas and unwillingness to share, were some of the difficulties reported. Participants were pleased with the staff development provided but had mixed or negative reactions toward efforts at articulation meetings at the site level after the staff development.(Appendix B)

Causative Analysis

There seemed to be several contributing factors to the problem of limited teacher articulation leading to increased discontinuity at the site level for children preschool through first grade. One factor was that early childhood education had not received district attention in some 18 years or more. The last big flurry of attention to early childhood was the establishment of the state funded preschool programs and state programs for child care, preschool through third grade, in the district and the move from double session to single session kindergarten. With the passage of P. L. 94-142, special education preschool classes were established. When the district began its adult education program ten years ago, parent education parent-child preschool classes were created, but as adult education is considered alternative education, not much district notice was taken until recently when outside agencies recognized the program as exemplary. During the past 18 years, other priorities had loomed in the district pre-empting attention to early childhood: closing of schools due to declining enrollment, reduction in force (RIF) with some teachers laid off, restructuring the district by creating junior and senior highs (three grade levels each), restructuring again with sixth grade moved to create middle schools and ninth grade returned to create four year high schools, categorical programs to serve special needs such as limited English proficient children, a push for academics at earlier and earlier grades, accountability, increasing graduation requirements at the high school, programs for children at risk especially for dropping out of school, the normal textbook adoption cycles, collective bargaining, technology for the schools, tightening of state budget for the schools. It may have seemed understandable that early childhood faded behind some of the other issues.

Another factor contributing to the problem was that the teachers with less credibility in the K - 12 system, the preschool and child care teachers, had more training in child development and early childhood education. Certification requirements for preschool and child care teachers specify early childhood and child development coursework. Kindergarten and first grade teachers may have had early childhood or child development training but hold elementary education credentials which do not require such coursework. During declining enrollment and the push downward of academics, teachers were re-assigned to the early grades who did not have specific training in child development or early childhood. The district did not provide special training and many of the teachers had sought training at conferences or workshops rather than in-depth courses. During the period of declining enrollment, the local universities had limited offerings in early childhood, and kindergarten and first grade teachers could not get inservice credit for community college coursework. Many district teachers nearing retirement took their coursework years ago so had little familiarity with current research and trends.

Another possible problem cause was pressure from upper grade teachers and administrators who did not have backgrounds in working with young children who had pressed for more direct instruction and rote learning, paper and pencil tasks, and demanded skills be taught at younger and younger ages so that some kindergarten and first grade teachers succumbed to using developmentally inappropriate practices further straining articulation and program continuity.

The district staff development had further alienated early childhood teachers during the past several years as it had focused upon instuctional strategies contrary to what is known about how young children learn. Thus, the teachers of younger children had felt less supported for demonstrating developmentally appropriate practices which often had been the antithesis of district staff development activities.

The district provides paid preparation time for high school, middle school and upper elementary teachers but not for primary grade teachers. This paid time has been negotiated into the teachers' contract. Perhaps the union is less interested in primary grade teachers or primary grade teachers do not take advantage of their union membership to advocate for paid time to meet. Whatever the reason, because schedules for early childhood teachers do not mesh, and there is not specific paid time in which to meet, nor an expressed value demonstrated by either the district or the union, early childhood teachers must struggle to find time to articulate with each other.

Since the beginning of the practicum process, the district has undergone further changes. A new superintendent was selected in June 1990. Re-organization of the district office began almost immediately placing secondary education trained administrators in positions of authority over instruction, curriculum, and staff development. Further, the school board has undergone changes with the addition of new board members requiring the secondary education trained administrators to inservice them as to district policies, procedures, goals and objectives. There has been a noticeable decline in interest in early childhood education. The Early Childhood Committee's report to the school board which had been postponed for eight months was received with appreciation but with a decided lack of enthusiasm. No implementation committee was established to take the recommendations made by the Early Childhood Committee and improve early childhood settings within the district.

Additionally, the principals at the elementary schools, many nearing the end of their careers, are being pressured to restructure their schools without training or direction being given. Many are fearful; others may retire soon; most are resistant to take on projects that will cause them stress, more work, or negative attention from the new superintendent. Even if personal views of elementary principals value positive changes for early childhood, there has been a sharp decline in risk-taking under the new district leadership.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Discontinuity of the Teaching/learning Process

Much of the research on school reform, effective schools and developmentally appropriate practice has pointed out discontinuity of the teaching/learning process as an area of concern. The California School Readiness Task Force Report, *Here They Come, Ready or Not,* examined current research and conditions in California regarding four to six year olds in public school programs. The Task Force pointed out discrepancies between research and current conditions. One of the program weaknesses identified by the Task Force was the limited existence of linkages between programs for four year olds and early primary programs. Another area the Task Force identified was the lack of consistent training and credentialing of teachers of four to six year olds.

Klein (1981) addressed the discontinuity facing young children in the school settings regarding learning experiences. She focused on the discontinuity of teaching which occurs even though it is well known that "growth and learning are gradual processes which do not start and stop, but are continuous".(p. 19) Teacher expectations play a role in discontinuity since teachers at preschool, kindergarten, and at first grade may see their roles and the outcomes for children differently, an observation made also by Goffin (1989) and Hatch and Freeman (1988) and also in the survey conducted in the district by the Early Childhood Committee.

Additional resources supported finding solutions to discontinuity of the learning/teaching process, pointing out teachers needed to know where their curriculum fits in the overall school curriculum, and the roles the teachers have in the fit. (Hoegl, 1985; Cotton and Conklin,1989; Granucci, 1990; Irvine, et al 1980; Irvine, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Peck et al, 1988; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990; Kagan, 1989). Hains et al (1989) also focused on one of the causes of discontinuity: the differences in expectations of kindergarten and preschool teachers for readiness skills at kindergarten entry and exit.

Teacher Isolation

The professionals pointed to the isolation of the classroom teacher as another area of concern which has implications for the discontinuity of children's learning; it is difficult to plan for articulation if teachers go inside their classrooms as they arrive at school and rarely speak to other adults until they go home at the end of the day. Little (1990) examined teacher isolation and the difficulty in defining ways to reduce it. She studied teacher collaboration and collegiality identifying four elements along a continuum, independence to interdependence, which can be called teacher collegiality: storytelling and scanning for ideas, aid and assistance, sharing, and joint work. Joint work is the form of collegiality which addresses the larger than the individual processes of shared responsibilities, group affiliations based on profession, planning and support for teachers' initiative, and leadership for professional practice. Little noted the rewards and costs of collaboration. She also pointed out that the first three areas on the continuum do not necessarily support real connectedness for teachers, in fact, teachers may continue to maintain isolation even though they engage in the first three. Scott and Smith (1987) synthesized the literature related to teacher isolation and in addition to the information mentioned previously noted that teacher isolation also contributes to resistance to change.

The Early Childhood Committee survey and the pilot interviews identified difficulties around the issue of isolation for teachers approaching the end of their careers and also negativity. Huberman (1989) looked at teachers along a career continuum to identify what factors helped teachers derive satisfaction from their careers. Teachers toward the end of their careers invest less in change; they wish to be left alone to teach. Teachers persist longer if they have been able to try things out in a safe environment and if they feel a connectedness. Evans (1989) pointed out the need to recapture and motivate teachers at mid-career which takes somewhat different strategies than those needed for beginning teachers. A lack of involvement in decision making increases alienation (a term defined to encompasse isolation, normlessness, and powerlessness) was found by Calabrese and Seldin (1987). Alienation results in negative behaviors. The researchers noted that time for peer interactions are not routinely provided by schools. Alienation also furthers increased isolation because the more teachers feel they alone are responsible for what goes on in their classrooms, the less likely they are to share information and seek advice from others (Rosenholtz, 1984). Su (1990) studied teacher education candidates observing that teacher education programs tend to create a sense of normalcy about isolation from peers even before teaching careers begin. Hatch and Freeman (1988) discussed "philosophy-reality conflicts" where school settings require one set of behaviors which is in conflict with teachers' philosophies resulting in a state of normlessness.

In *Teachers, Their World and Their Work: Implications for School Improvement*, Lieberman and Miller (1984) examined teacher isolation and the struggle to improve the organization while supporting the individual teacher, political pressures, the change process, and the move to incorporate the effective schools research. Lortie (1985) too devoted much study to teacher isolation and the quality of the teaching life. He also focused on privatism, the ease with which anyone can tell teachers what to do -- the media, supervisors, parents, the community, and the lack of social interaction as related concerns. If the norms of the school are that teachers will perform their roles in the privacy of their classrooms,teachers/schools continue to impede professional growth of staff and discourage effective teaching. Other resources (Glickman, 1985; Joyce et al 1989; Lieberman, 1988; Lieberman, 1985; Little, 1982; Manley-Cassimer and Wasserman, 1989; Tye and Tye, 1984; Zahorik, 1987) held similar perspectives concerning teacher isolation.Mutchler and Duttweiler, 1990), stressed the need to actively build collaboration, professional skills, a different view of authority, and commitment into the implementation plans for shared decision making if traditional barriers are to be overcome.

Organizational Development and Management Theories

The professionals examined business and education focusing on the school as an organization, the development of its staff, leadership and conditions of the workplace which continue program discontinuity for children. Schmuck and Runkel (1985) examined the organization and its component parts, analyzing where in the process the problem might be, communication, systems, time management, lack of skills. Focusing on staff development, Purkey and Smith (1983) and Scott and Smith (1987) stressed the role teachers have in developing collaborative plans and collegial relations and in developing a sense of community.

Smith and Piele (1989) highlighted the many skills areas needed to create smoothly running schools, breaking down the process into very small areas of concern for the leader/administrator to consider. As a resource, the book is useful in attacking specific steps of a problem.

Resources from the business world provided information related to program discontinuity as leading writers on improving the corporation described the change process in an organization, the role of the leader and the individual employees role related to change and the organization (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Dyer, 1977; Francis & Young, 1979; Hanson & Lubin, 1988; Naisbitt, 1982; Peters, 1988).

Effective Schools Research/School Reform

The professionals who have tackled the many aspects of the effective schools research examined the components of the problem such as school climate, site based management, participative or shared decision making. Futrell (1988) explored the school reform arena from the teachers' perspectives. She considered the reform area to hold new, broader roles for teachers beyond the classroom for site impact, district impact, and professional impact. There is no room for teacher isolation nor discontinuity when teachers are active participants in the change process. The move from top down management, and the ideas being generated in the business sector indicate a change in value for the teachers' role in improving schools.

In examining " the teacher as constrained decision maker", Conley (1988) focused on the need to maintain an administrative balance between the bureaucratic amd the professional models of school organizations to accommodate the teachers developing roles in the decision making process. Periods of change bring challenges which a balance can temper.

Additional resources addressed the fit of the effective school research to the problem of discontinuity of the learning experience and teacher isolation (Bacharach and Conley, 1986;Bank et al, 1989; Bolin, 1989; Cotton and Conklin, 1989; David, 1989; Foster, 1990; Garcia, 1986; Garmston and Pahre, 1988; Glotthorn and Newberg, 1984; Lieberman, 1985; Lieberman and Miller, 1990; McGill, 1989; Mutchler and Duttweiler,1990; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1990; O'Neil, 1990; Pink, 1986; Sergiovanni, 1984; Strusinski, 1990; Weick, 1982).

CHAPTER III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

One goal for the practicum was to improve program continuity through improving site level teacher articulation preschool through first grade. A related goal was to improve teachers' connectedness with each other for planning and articulation thereby reducing teacher isolation.

Specific objectives included identifying activities which could be used to improve site level articulation at the aforementioned grade levels, and reducing teacher isolation at grade levels and between grade levels. It was projected that at the completion of the implementation of the practicum, teachers participating in articulation activities would report increases in both individual and group skills for articulation leading to improved program continuity for children and would describe application of skills to other areas. Further success would be demonstrated as participants described the local plan they developed to improve articulation and program continuity at their school site.

Measurement of Objectives

An evaluation tool was developed by the author which was used to measure changes in attitude about articulation groups and the skills acquired, and the increases in specific activities planned to improve program continuity. The evaluation instrument was given in an individual pre- and post- written format with results compared. (Appendix D and E) Principals at school sites participating were interviewed at the end of the implementation phase to gather their observations as to changes in behavior and attitudes noted in participating teachers. (Appendix F)

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

A log was kept of the meetings, training, phone calls, and comments of participants, principals and district office staff. Information recorded in the log was analyzed on a monthly basis to ascertain if adjustments needed to be made or if new information relevant to the later evaluation of the practicum was being provided. Such information was flagged on the log for review at the termination of the implementation. (Appendix I)

CHAPTER IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Fullan (1990) and Fullan et al (1990) saw the teacher in the role of learner as a way to improve the schools. Teacher as learner includes collaboration and a process called "reflective practice" which allows the teacher the opportunity to analyze what he or she does . Collaboration was also stressed by Tye and Tye (1984).They addressed the importance of providing time for faculty interactions and specific opportunities for both teachers and their administrators to work together on tasks and activities.

Focusing on teachers and leaders developing sets of shared values and shared commitments, Sergiovanni (1990) suggested developing a value for collegiality and utilizing shared decision making. Purkey and Smith (1985) and Duke, Showers and Imber (1980) emphasized roles teachers have in shared decision making. The latter focused on the costs and benefits to involve teachers in shared decision making noting the benefits may outweigh the costs. O'Neil (1990) addressed the need for new roles for teachers including working together to improve instruction and to provide a forum for experienced teachers to support beginning teachers.

The need to provide training in group process skills was found in several sources. Bolin (1989) looked at the need for locating decision making at the level most concerned with the decisions -- at the school. He addressed malfunctioning groups and the necessity to provide training in group process if educators are to begin to work at school based decision making. Emphasizing the need to provide the necessary conditions to promote educational change, Lieberman (1985) stressed using group process skill training with teachers to increase their problem solving and work group skills. Joyce et al (1989) described the actual practice of moving toward school reform. They described mistakes made by not providing training for leaders and teachers to work together. They also suggested the helpfulness of providing facilitators in group process to these new working teams. Smith and Scott (1990) detailed the need for principals to ensure teachers have the resources needed to allow full participation including training and coordination of schedules if necessary so teachers see the commitment of administration to teachers' participation.

Smith and Piele (1989) devoted chapters in the book for which they were editors, *School Leadership Handbook for Excellence*, on school based management, participative decision making, quality circle techniques, communicating and leading meetings. The authors who write about organizational development both for business and the schools, Peters (1988), Deal and Kennedy (1982), and Schmuck and

Runkel (1985) emphasized that peer group consensus is the major tool for successful change processes. The latter authors also provided skill building techniques to support the change process within the organization of the school. A more structured approach to address group process skills training and management of shared decision making is through Quality Circles, a Japanese management strategy which originated in the United States, went to Japan and has since been re-introduced after the Japanese improved upon the idea. Quality circles are voluntary groups of employees who meet together regularly to come up with solutions for problems in the workplace. The circles then make recommendations to management after having first gathered data and coming to consensus about solutions. Quality circles, first introduced in the corporate community have made gains in education and have implications for school based management (Conley et al, 1988; Dignan and Schelkun,1988; Greenbaum et al, 1987; Hellweg and Freiberg, 1984; Hunnicutt, 1987; Lake, 1983; Land, 1983; Lilly,1985; Mutchler and Duttweiler, 1990; Strusinski, 1990). Resources which provided detailed information about the process and implementation of quality circles in education as a strategy to improve skills in working together and in coming to consensus indicated quality circles and their structured techniques hold promise for improving program continuity and reducing teacher isolation (Ack, 1982; Browne, 1982; Chase, 1983; Greenbaum et al, 1987; Hawley, 1984; Hawley, 1985; Lake,1983; Land,1983; Marburger, 1985; Small, 1987; Stephens and Forest,1981).

Program continuity was addressed by a number of sources. Cotton and Conklin (1989) in examining early childhood education noted that student outcomes improve when teachers preschool through first grade work jointly for program continuity from year to year. Hoegl (1985) in his work for the Illinois State Board of Education, Department of Planning, Research, and Evaluation emphasized the important role staff development plays for increasing program continuity. He noted staff development for continuity accounted for more lasting effects in first grade using cognitive measures, and when he used the qualitative sub-test of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT), some students in second and third grade demonstrated continued effects. The 1990 updated version of *Effective School Practices* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory) noted that continuity can be ensured through curriculum planning and that in effective schools, collaborative curriculum planning and decision making are routine practices. This decision making and collaboration address building continuity across grade levels with teachers being aware of where they fit in curriculum.

Description of Selected Solution

It was important to provide training in group process skills to working groups so they might be enabled to work more effectively together. The training was the piece that was missing from the pilot project for articulation of curriculum this past year; and although the participants were interested in developing program continuity, they did not have the necessary tools. By providing group decision making, problem solving skills, the teachers were enabled to develop skills to reach consensus on barriers to articulation as a first step toward tackling other school site issues especially concerning developmentally appropriate practice leading to increased program continuity in early childhood. By practicing their new skills to focus on real problems, there was more ownership both for the groups and for the products the groups created.

The practicum task was to provide group decision making skills, and follow-up facilitation for district preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers to improve articulation skills leading to better program continuity. The author had confidence in this solution based on other experiences with working groups in other settings which had had positive results after training in similar techniques. The district is moving toward school based management. Research indicated the need to provide skills to those who are working together to affect change. Research also indicated the need to break down teacher isolation; providing skills to work together increases both opportunity and positive outlook toward teaming in the school setting.

Report of Action Taken

At the time the practicum proposal was sent in, an inservice for preschool, kindergarten and first grade teachers had been scheduled for the orientation day as teachers returned to work in the Fall. In June, the school district acquired a new superintendent, and he changed the format of the orientation day to present his plan for the district, notification of the change received by the author only two weeks before the scheduled event. The implementation of the practicum took the next three months to rearrange. Immediately after the cancellation of the planned inservice, assistance from the Director of Elementary Curriculum and the Associate Superintendent of Personnel was sought to speak to the elementary principals at the district management retreat about the project and to solicit participation on the author's behalf. A group process skill training was held at the beginning of the school year for elementary school compensatory education special project facilitators, a key group to influence attitudes at the school site level. There was some verbal support for the practicum project at the close of the training.

The author met with each of the aforementioned district administrators after the management retreat receiving a list of potential participating principals and schools, probably six total. An abstract of the project was then created, sent to the principals identified by the district administrators, and follow up phone calls made. One of the two district administrators' positions was eliminated,the Elementary Curriculum Director,and an elementary principal retired. The curriculum director accepted the principalship stating he would be willing to participate in the project as soon as he became familiar with the staff and school.

Six principals responded with some interest in the project when queried. One wished teacher involvement in the project indicating it was a very busy time of year and perhaps after parent-teacher conferences in November would be a good time. Another principal invited the author to give a presentation to his staff at a scheduled staff meeting. Four indicated interest but would leave it up to their teachers. After giving the presentation, that school and two others decided to forego participation in the practicum, leaving three others still considering as well as the school where the curriculum director had been reassigned for a total of four potential participating schools. Continuous contact was maintained with the principals at regular district meetings and by phone.

During the waiting period, pre and post training surveys were designed and shared with the practicum advisor. Training materials were pulled together based on the research garnered regarding building teams and group decision making skills. District resources including Adult Education Quality Circle training materials were reviewed with a two and one half hour training design for information and interactive skill building selected as the focus for the initiation of the practicum.

From September through October, the new Superintendent made significant changes in the way the district operated. Principals were made part of the Superintendent's Cabinet and district level administrators, the former cabinet, were relegated to being support for the school-based management efforts the Superintendent planned. Cabinet meetings lasted five and six hours. Principals nearing the end of their careers appeared fearful of changes. Principals and teachers expressed stress and pressure due to requirements being given to the school sites. No inservices were held for teachers or for administrators in techniques to further required tasks.

The author spoke with the key contact at one of the elementary schools wishing to participate, the site where the principal wished to have teacher input in deciding to participate. The key contact committed the school preschool through first grade teachers to the training which was then scheduled for December. She indicated that participation would be voluntary with only one teacher not wishing to participate. The Curriculum Director, now principal, invited the author to present the project to his staff. At the close of the presentation he indicated he would speak to staff and confirm their participation in the project. The remaining two principals continued to be interested and were informed of the date for training with a request to confirm. They did not follow through, and when called said they had informed their teachers and the author could expect some to attend the training. The training was planned for approximately 20 to 30 participants from four schools.

Two schools, the two which committed earlier, sent participants to the training in December. The district called a meeting for the same time a few days before which required some of the participants to back out at the last minute because of the conflict; twelve participants, preschool through first grade from two elementary schools were involved in the training. The author, a trained facilitator and consultant in group decision making skills, provided the training and facilitation with an assist from a site based facilitator. Pre-training surveys were completed. A problem had been selected for practicing group process skills, *Barriers to Articulation.* The training, labeled Decision Making Skill Building for Teams, consisted of introductions with an author designed activity to further interactions, expectations of participants for the training, a general overview of the benefits of having shared skills to generate ideas, solve problems, come to consensus, gather data, analyze data, develop solutions, present findings and recommendations, conduct effective meetings.(Appendix G) An activity designed to demonstrate the benefit of synergy was experienced. Using the problem, *Barriers to Articulation,* the participants practiced skills of brainstorming, prioritizing, consensus building, cause and effect diagraming, and giving mini-management presentations.(Appendix H) Participants responded positively to the training,especially preschool teachers who generally are not included in most district inservices; they generated a number of potential solutions for articulation barriers, and identified that they indeed could have control over improving articulation. Participants reflected that the skills learned had been useful, that they attend many non-effective meetings which the techniques practiced could improve. Participants were not interested in the author serving as a facilitator for future meetings at their schools. Teachers expressed feelings of being inundated with requests for their time and saw any further participation as adding on one more thing.

Principals and participants were sent copies of the brainstorm lists and cause and effect diagram generated during the training. Principals were called to check on the feedback they had received about the training. One principal indicated she would like further help with a big school problem to be addressed in early Spring.

During the next month, the author received two requests from outside the district to provide training in group decision making skills. The requests came as a result of district staff knowing the author was involved in a group decision making skills training project. Although unable to participate in outside training, the author designated staff who were able to provide training as requested. An additional request for help came from one of the kindergarten teacher participants who felt skills would help district kindergarten grade level teachers to address district administration regarding developmentally appropriate early childhood practices.

When the two principals whose schools participated were called to set up appointments to assess progress, both stated they would not have any time until mid-February to early March. An interview questionnaire to use with the principals was designed to get consistent information. (Appendix F)

In February, the practicum midpoint progress report was sent to the practicum advisor, as well as a copy of the training packet, and the log to date . Additional resources were gathered throughout the implementation period especially those dealing with team building, school-based management and group process decision making skills, particularly quality circles.

As chairperson of the district Early Childhood Committee, the author was finally successful in securing a time to give the committee's recommendations for early childhood in the school district to the school board. Two kindergarten teachers and one parent who participated on the committee assisted with the presentation.
The board expressed positive comments regarding the quality of the report and accepted it. District administration has, however, not established an implementation committee and did disband the

original committee. There no longer seems to be a value for early childhood within the district except in adding to the sites where schoolage child care is offered.

Each of the two principals was interviewed about the changes in staff they had observed or any other positive or negative results tied to the training in December. Both principals felt the training had been worthwhile and both indicated they would be working to expand skills of all staff in group decision making skills. There seemed to be more comfort with communicating across the grade levels, preschool through first grade since the training. Some informal articulation had occurred at one of the schools. The principals gave out the post training surveys to participants which were then returned to the author by early April.

Necessary permissions for implementation of the practicum had been secured for the original practicum proposal. The process took a longer time to initiate due to changes in district level administrators, Summer, and a shift to school based management after original permissions were in place. In future, to solicit permissions and advocates for the practicum earlier would allow for fewer feelings of starting over when changes occur. Some changes cannot be planned for, however, as was the case with the arrival of the new Superintendent. His presence created some changed behaviors in district personnel, and he had his own timeline for his plans for the school district.

From the time of the original proposal timeline which was aborted, through the next six months as new agreements needed to be forged and implementation was under way, the trust level and climate of the district generally became negative. Individuals participating at the two schools were supportive of the training but expressed concern about the district. The five non-participating schools expressed a number of negative opinions about adding to their workloads, finding time to do extra things, and the lack of valuing for what they do by the district level.

Materials and supplies were created, prepared or purchased previously for other trainings. Additional handouts were printed at cost to the author. The district owns the training modules which were purchased some years ago when the district began Quality Circles, so the specific modules for group process skills were borrowed as needed. The Adult Education Center was used for the inservice training.

A calendar for what was originally proposed and what was successfully implemented may be found in Appendix C.

CHAPTER V

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

One of the goals for the practicum was to improve program continuity through improving preschool through first grade teachers' articulation at the site level. A further goal was to reduce the sense of isolation felt by teachers by providing skill building which encourages group planning, articulation and connectedness. To that end, a two and one half hour training in group decision making skills for teachers, preschool through first grade, was developed.

Training in Group Decision Making Skills

Pre-training survey

Out of a possible seven elementary schools which have preschool, kindergarten, and first grade classes, two schools participated in the project; a total of eleven teachers and one principal attended the two and one half hour training in group decision making skills. A pre-training survey was administered with eleven responding. Questions were asked to ascertain any previous training, whether or not teachers meet currently to coordinate, plan or discuss program continuity for children, difficulties in both attending and participating in meetings. A question was asked teachers to identify roadblocks to articulating for program continuity across grade levels. An additional question was asked concerning participants' expectations for group decision making training.

Three preschool, three kindergarten, four first grade teachers, and one principal completed the survey. When asked what specific training participants had had, participants provided responses detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

Specific Previous Training in Group Decision Making Skills - Pre-Survey

Group Decision Making Skill	Number of responses Preschool	Kindergarten	First	Principal
Brainstorming	2	1	3	1
Typing of problems	1	1	1	1
Prioritizing	1	1	4	1
Coming to consensus	1	1	2	1
Data gathering	1	1	2	1
Cause and effect diagrams	1	0	1	1
Nominal group technique	0	0	0	a
Force field analysis	0	0	0	a
Management presentations	1	0	1	1

a Indicates "a little"

When asked if the participants currently meet across grade levels, preschool through first grade to coordinate, plan, or discuss program continuity for children, all eleven participants indicated they do not meet.

Participants when asked, "What do you find most difficult about attending and participating in meetings?" identified the following: time; being very one way (participant's way); few meetings in which invited to attend; time consuming - takes time away from tasks needing attention for job and frequently not concise and pertinent; some meetings don't move along quickly so feel frustrated at time-loss because schedule is so full; time and scheduling; planning a time that all teachers, preschool through first, can attend without children responsibilities; often have to catch a preschool teacher at nap time; preparing, getting organized and deciding what outcomes are desired for meeting; finding time - leaving a messy room and having to return to school after the meeting to get ready for next school day; demands from many sources on time; leaving other responsibilities undone in mid-stream. Two teachers suggested solutions of release time and preparation time as helping with current meeting difficulties.

When asked what participants considered to be roadblocks to articulation, preschool through first grade, five respondents indicated time for meeting and planning ; three described the different schedules for the three grade levels; one indicated both time and scheduling; one gave no response and the principal indicated there was no articulated curriculum to use as a focus.

The following expectations for group decision making training were given: to become more skilled in problem solving, practical solutions to use; help in finding alternative ways to exchange information; personal and professional growth; a miracle - to create time; how to plan time needed; share information; become acquainted; develop a priority in problems to be solved.

In order to provide reality for practicing skills learned a problem was identified, *Barriers to Articulation*. Participants went through an overview of group decision making: why use such a process, typical skills and when they are used, how participants would spend the training time. The larger group separated into two smaller groups. Each group practiced brainstorming, typing of problems, prioritizing, coming to consensus, cause and effect diagraming, mini management presentations back to the larger group. The author and a trained staff facilitator each worked with one of the small groups. The groups were not divided by school but were purposely mixed so each of the groups had staff from both participating schools and from all three grade levels. The results of the work of the training for the two groups may be found in Appendix H. Throughout the training, teachers came up with spontaneous solutions which could easily be implemented to improve articulation such as sharing classroom newsletters with each other. One teacher said as the training progressed, "It isn't really a matter of money or wanting someone else to do something; I can take the initiative to make things work better". At the end of the training a verbal evaluation was done with information recorded on a flip chart. Teachers stated they liked the process, met others for the first time, could see how the skills could apply to staff meetings. Others felt the power of the group and indicated that they recognized that participants were all thinking along the same lines.

Although the author had planned to be available for each school site to serve as a facilitator for future meetings, participants did not wish to commit to meetings beyond the regular staff meetings being held for all staff, Kindergarten through fifth grade. The two principals of the participating schools were consulted. Each felt that it might be better with the outside pressures coming from district restructuring for the principals to monitor changes at the site level and to give the author feedback.

The author let teachers and principals know she was available as a resource. During the next two months calls were made to the principals. In March, interviews of the two principals whose schools had participated in the training were held. A question was asked about changes in preschool through first grade staff regarding articulation for planning, coordinating efforts, socializing and communicating that had been noted. One principal observed that staff in those grade levels were talking together more, a forum had been opened. Preschool lead teacher was more comfortable about speaking to whole staff and spoke more frequently. Where appropriate, children's center (preschool) staff had been included in conferences which had not occurred previously. The other principal spoke of the restructuring efforts of the school and how early intervention was part of the school plan. Those trained were contributing by identifying steps for early intervention. She described a continuing barrier which she hoped would be addressed in the articulation from preschool to kindergarten regarding expectations for parents.

When asked what feedback the principals had received about the training, both stated that all staff were positive. One principal added that her staff had since used processes to reach consensus on school decision. Another question asked whether any changes in regular staff meeting participation, ownership, meeting skills had been noted in the staff that participated in the training. One principal described how he felt there were no direct changes, however, a non-smoking kindergarten teacher at his school (who participated) brought up an issue regarding a first grade teacher who smokes at a staff meeting, used some of the group decision making skills, handling the issue to everyone's satisfaction. He stated that he did not think the issue would have been raised publicly had the training not occurred. The other principal indicated that her staff was beginning to take more ownership for decision making.

When asked if the principals saw a benefit to their teachers participating in the training they both indicated they did; staff were more open about talking in group meetings. Principals were also asked if there were additional activities for which follow-up activities could be provided. One felt there needed to be more meetings where teachers could be involved in problem solving; he could see the need to provide additional training to this end. The other principal indicated specific skills such as cause and effect diagraming could be of value to aid staff in looking at contributing factors to problems and solutions. She also stated that it was helpful to have someone not on staff say during the training some of the same things she had been saying because it helped increase her effectiveness.

Post-training survey

Eleven participants of the training held in December completed post-training surveys in March and early April. The same questions were again asked as were asked on the pre-training survey. Table 3 depicts the participants responses to the specific training they can now itemize for which they have had training. (See Table 3)

Table 3
Specific Previous Training in Group Decision Making Skills - Post-Survey

	Number of responses			
Group decision making skills	Preschool	Kindergarten	First	Principal
Brainstorming	3	3	4	1
Typing of problems	3	3	4	1
Prioritizing	3	3	4	1
Coming to consensus	2	3	4	1
Data gathering	2	3	3	1
Cause and effect diagrams	2	3	4	1
Nominal group technique	1	2	2	0
Force field analysis	0	0	0	0
Management presentations	1	0	2	0

Note .Number participating: 3 preschool; 3 Kindergarten; 4 first grade; one principal

When asked if the participants currently meet across grade levels, preschool through first grade, to coordinate, plan, or discuss program continuity for children two responded "yes" and nine responded "no". One respondent added the comment that any meeting is not done in a formal way.

The question asking if improvement in meetings had been noted since the training was provided elicited the following responses: three "no", two no response, one "no change" and four indicated yes. One participant said improvements had been minor. She went on to state that they did not have a facilitator to keep meetings on track,and that meetings were so far apart that it was difficult to maintain continuity. She also indicated a need for staff to build a working relationship.

Participants were asked if they now feel they have some tools with which to attack roadblocks to articulation, preschool through first grade, to plan program continuity for children. Six responded affirmatively, three negatively, and two did not respond (both preschool). Comments provided included the following: "Would like time set aside even if only three to four times per year; time is still an issue"; "Have resourceful information, given opportunity to apply it".

The final question asked participants to describe how and where they will use their new group decision making skills. Participants gave the following responses: "Staff meetings - I would hope our staff meetings would follow a well thought out format. I do not feel that staff act as a unit; in talking to peers it seems we lack leadership, total staff commitment, and follow through"; "At cluster meetings and teachers' meetings"; "Future planning"; "In leadership roles and team projects"; "Valuable in meeting settings, and I have used such skills in other meetings"; "Will try at faculty meetings, but I don't see myself a leader to set the tone".

Results

The goals of the practicum included reducing teacher isolation, increasing the skills in working together so teachers would be more comfortable in addressing articulation efforts to increase program continuity for children. As a beginning step, the practicum brought teachers together, assessed the skills they had before training, asked them to identify if they were articulating and if not, why, gave them a real problem, barriers to articulation, with which to practice skills as they learned them, gave them the opportunity to experience what was possible to accomplish within a short amount of time to move decision making along, allowed them time to practice skills, queried the principals to see if they had observed changes in teacher behavior, and again surveyed the participants to see how they felt about the training and what they identified to be the value. The results were mixed; however, for a two and a half hour training, there was a move from powerlessness to a sense that teachers felt they had some tools with which to tackle problems. Although teachers still tend to remain isolated by grade level, some beginning steps were taken to bridge communication gaps and to plan together for students.

Additionally, even though the training was only attended by preschool through first grade teachers at two schools, many more teachers, principals, and district level staff were exposed to the idea of using group decision making skills training to increase articulation to improve program continuity in the early childhood years through the author's efforts in making presentations to school staff, sending abstracts and making phone calls to principals and district management. The two participating principals were positive in terms of further uses for training and decision making skills.

Conclusions

From contact with individual participants and the two participating principals, the author can identify some positive outcomes: better comunication between some teachers, inclusion of more levels of teachers for the benefit of the student learner, teachers identifying more skills at their disposal for group decision making, awareness that conflicting schedules are deterrents to articulation but not impossible to overcome, support for principals' efforts to involve teachers in school site decision making, increased collegial planning, awareness that individual teacher's perceptions are not unique, at least during the training. The effort, though limited,was worthwhile.

In looking at this project as one more piece in early childhood awareness, it was also successful. By grouping preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers together for training, a sense of a continuum was established. The early childhood grades have long been abandoned by the district for specific staff development, so any efforts to pay attention to teachers at these grades gives value and importance.

This particular project, once the new superintendent came on board in the district, was too large for a minor practicum. Through time, the changes to the district grew so that had the author known how difficult it would be to reorganize and gather buy-in all over again, perhaps another project would have been selected. It was enormously time consuming and frustrating. The district climate and norms were turned upside down. Staff withdrew from unpleasantness and decreased risk taking which limited the pool for recruiting participants.

The author, although not a seeker of impossible tasks, will continue to offer assistance to principals and staff in group decision making skills as a means to increase articulation and encourage program continuity. Change cannot be expected of teachers who do not have the tools with which to bring about the change. Teachers receive training to work with students but often are shortchanged when receiving skills to work with peers or as an employee in a group work setting. The research completed for the project identified the need to get teachers out of their classrooms into collaborative, collegial settings. Research also indicated that teachers need to model collegiality for students to increase students' skills in working together to build student connectedness and avert later dropping out.

Recommendations

The author cannot stress enough the importance of paying particular attention to the political climate when taking on and implementing projects. The importance of a project, the need for the project, the benefits of a project become meaningless if the political climate is not supportive. Being able to set aside valuable projects to bring forward at more favorable opportunities is a luxury but perhaps also a necessity. Hammering away at a project of worth while those that need to support the project are fearful, resistant, and entrenching to fight larger battles, is fruitless.

In terms of the project itself, more opportunities to do preliminary district trainings with staff at the three grade levels might give teachers a chance to see the value of skills in a variety of settings and be more welcoming of developing skills together at the site level. Seeking grant funds to provide release time in which to do the training rather than volunteered time might also give the message to teachers that there is value for the training and they, the teachers, matter. Originally, the training was to happen before the school year began so teachers would have skills to bring to the work place for the year. As it became necessary to adapt the project schedule, teachers were asked to squeeze training in after parent-teacher conferences and before Christmas holidays, a less than desirable time.

The training itself was well received, the right amount of time to learn and practice beginning group decision making skills. The use of a real problem, barriers to articulation, allowed teachers to practice skills while focusing on an issue that caused frustration and for which many complaints were generated regularly. Teachers during the training moved from a position of ascribing the problem to others -- administration, the Board, to identifying ways they themselves could improve articulation.

After the training, it had been planned that additional skill building sessions would be provided through the author serving as facilitator at staff/ articulation meetings, sharing resources for tackling next steps in decision making. Teachers indicated they were too impacted with responsibilities and unwilling to agree to additional meetings. Principals, fulfilling new agendas of the restructured district administration, did not wish to introduce additional change at the site level on top of other changes. More work with principals as to what the advantages might be for them in implementing change through trained staff may increase ability to provide follow up facilitation and training.

For additional activities beyond the one time training and any possible facilitation, presentations to key planning groups at district and school site levels may increase the opportunities to train staff, parents, students to enlarge the pool of trained individuals working in groups deciding on issues related to schooling. Success breeds success so creating a critical mass may increase demand for decision making skills training as a resource.

Dissemination

Information about the project is being disseminated internally within the district by the participants, principals, and author through informal conversations. Requests for similar trainings have come from other working groups wishing to develop skills of team members. Externally, two arenas, early childhood education and adult education in Kindergarten - Adult Education school districts, are being targeted for dissemination through conference presentations. This will occur when the author feels there has been additional success within the district to warrant publicizing the project including additional requests for training at school sites for the targeted staff at the three grade levels and further requests for additional training at the two participating project sites.

The training format for the two and one half hours itself has been shared with other school districts at their request after district employees have described it in classes at local universities in school administration. Three requests have been logged as well as requests for similar trainings. Two of the three requests were fulfilled; the other request, out of the area, was referred to consultants living in that area.

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APPENDIX A

(completed May,June 1989)

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS

Total number of responses: 70

1. Grade level: Preschool 13 Kindergarten 28 1st Grade 29

2. I have ______ students in my class this year.
   Pre-school: from 7 - 34 with majority clustering at 22 - 25
   Kindergarten: from 23 - 32 with majority clustering at 29 - 30
   1st grade: from 22 - 29 with majority clustering at 29

3. My class begins at _______ and ends at _______.
   Preschool: *9:30 - 12:30 (majority) child care - preschool 6:30am-6pm*
   Kindergarten: *8:20 - 11:30 am with various early and late configurations*
   because of busing, each school's time a little different
   1st grade: *8:40am - 2:35pm (various configurations a few minutes earlier or later)*

4. Do you have early and late groupings?
   Kindergarten: *yes 16 ; no 12*
   1st grade: *yes 0; no 29*

5. Check the following components of your classroom environment:
   playhouse small manipulatives large blocks unit blocks
   science materials math manipulatives language arts activities
   art materials accessible to children library books accessible to children
   other
   Preschool: *All have all materials except for:*
   4 have no unit blocks
   1 listed having large motor materials
   1 has musical materials
   3 have computers
   Kindergarten: *All have all materials except for:*
   5 do not have large blocks
   8 mentioned having puzzles, creative games, books, tapes, puppet theaters
   1st grade: *Majority have almost all items :*
   6 added extras - listening centers, legos, puzzles

6. Do you provide time and materials for children to select their own activities?
   Preschool: *all yes*
   Kindergarten: *all yes*
   1st grade: *1 no; 1 on rare occasions; 27 yes when assignments done*

7. I teach in a : a. portable b. classroom designed for Kindergarten
c. standard classroom d. shared classroom

Preschool: *5 portable; 1 shared portable; 0 Kindergarten room; 3 standard classroom*
Kindergarten: *1 portable; 7 standard classrooms; 19 kindergarten class-rooms; 1 shared Kindergarten classroom*
1st: *1 portable; 28 standard classrooms*

8. List outdoor equipment available for your use:

Preschool: *slide, handle bars, climbing equipment; wheeled toys, tree swing, playhouse, sandboxes, tires, barrel, cement climbing pipe, teeter-totter, balance beam; trikes, jump ropes, balls; bridge; playscape, tunnels; elementary school playground when not in use by elementary; park adjacent to school; water table; ropes and tires, carpentry equipment, hoops, scooter boards, shovels and other sand and water toys, cones, bean bags and targets, bouncer(mini trampoline)*

Kindergarten: *climbing equipment, slides, fireman's pole, swings; balls, ropes, scooters, tricycles, wagons; crawl through barrel;hula hoops, tires, jumping platform; sandbox; teeter totter; traffic cones, water table, balance beam, plastic gallon jugs for kicking, bean bags; hopscotch, circles with numbers and letters;merry go round, rings, ladders, big wheels; parachutes*

1st grade: *balls, ropes, bean bags, relay equipment; hula hoops, foam hockey equipment, mats; swings, climbing- jungle gyms; rings; basketball hoop; tether balls; teeter totter, backboard; bars; parachute, slide; scooters, badminton set, roller skates; balance board; challenge course*

9. Do you have other large motor equipment available for your class use?
Preschool: *yes 12 no 1*
Kindergarten: *yes 21 no 7*
1st grade: *yes 17 no 12*

Explain: *Stegel; wheel chair in classroom; tumbling mat, obstacle course equipment for climbing over and through, scarves and streamers for movement exploration; stilts, wooden balance rockers, duck walkers, Irish mailers, step launchers, incline board, jump box; rocking chair; walking cups; batting tee, pitch back and nerf balls, hoppity hops, boppers, lummi sticks, deck rings, street hockey, koosh balls, roller racers; pogo stick; croquet, bowling, horseshoes, ring toss; stegel at school but generally inaccessible*

10. Are outdoor space and equipment close to your classroom?
Preschool: *yes 11 no 1 no answer 1*
Kindergarten: *yes 25 no 3*
1st grade: *20 no 9*

11. Check the following which apply: I use these teaching strategies:
Small group instruction Large group instruction Learning centers
Individualized learning materials Cooperative learning
EIS direct instruction Other
Preschool: *small group 11 large group 13 learning centers 7*
cooperative learning 8 individualized instruction 11
EIS 1 Other - activity center , individualized tutoring, High/Scope
Kindergarten: *small group 23 large group 27 learning centers 24*
cooperative learning 24 individualized instruction 25
EIS 21 Other - mother helpers as tutors, cross age tutors, half group (early and late groups), 1 to 1 teacher/student, self initiated (free choice by student)
1st grade: *small group 27 large group 27 learning centers 23*
cooperative learning 25 individualized instruction 20
EIS 20 Other: No other 20; peer teaching 5, math manipulatives, LEP children - tutoring, seatwork

12. Of the teaching strategies identified in #11, what percent of time daily would you estimate you spend utilizing each strategy?
Preschool: *Large group: 15% - 2; 20% - 3; 30% - 2; 40% - 1; 75% - 1; 5 minutes - 1*
Small group: 50% range - 10; 30% range - 15
Cooperative learning: majority 30 - 50%
Self-directed: range of 10 - 45%; average of 20%
Learning centers: average 20 - 30%
Kindergarten: *Large group: 75% - 10; majority clustered at 35%*
Small group: 20% - 75%; majority clustered at 30%
Learning Centers: 10% - 90%; majority clustered at 30%
Cooperative learning: 5%
Individualized learning: 14% - 33%; majority clustered at 25%
EIS: 10% - 80%; clustered at 75% (5 responding)
1st grade: *EIS/Large group: 20% - 88% the majority; 100% - 3*
Small group: 15% - 60%
Other including cooperative learning: 5% - 20%

13. Do you use workbooks? Yes; No; Sometimes; Comments
Preschool: Yes 2; No 7; Sometimes 4
Kindergarten: Yes 20; No 3; Sometimes 5
1st grade: Yes 18; No 4; Sometimes 7
Comments: ***Preschool:*** *Beginning letter writing - D'Nealian program;*
Kindergarten: *Use but supplement with manipulative materials in math, charts, journals, big books, and trade books in reading; only because they are bought for us(not essential to a Kdg. program); cut and*

sort books so children receive one page at a time;reading readiness workbooks only; reading and math;Holt reading workbook and math text; just started math workbooks at end of year. Found out don't want to use it in future; district issued math and reading workbooks; very useful;State and district provide them so I feel obligated; dislike them; very little! introduce workbooks during 3rd quarter, and let children work on them mostly at home; hate them - did not use Holt readiness books; do not plan to use math workbook next year, but plan to use new readiness series along with my pre-reading skills kit; really don't like them but they are good for some structure development

1st grade: *Math, Phonics, and Reading;spelling; science;selected pages from phonics and math books; only use them reluctantly(Holt from Sept. to January);Addison Wesley math program in conjunction with manipulatives; used to provide independent work for children at their seats; reading and English; when appropriate*

14. Do you use other types of paper-pencil activities? yes; no

Preschool: *Yes 10; No 3*
Kindergarten: *Yes 27; No 1*
1st Grade: *Yes 28; No 1*

15. Describe some of the teacher made activities you use in your classroom:

Preschool: *Art activities, pattern games for matching; seasonal lotto games, fishing game, flannelboard stories and songs, carpeted barrel for movement, sensory and/or tactile games and activities, lots of small group activities;plan-do-review activities and small group (High/Scope), set up various movement and sensory experiences; workjobsII, alphabet games; memory games, making math games to go with Math Their Way; play dough, flash cards; small group games;matching items on sticks or cards, individualized laminated matching games; cut and paste activities, sorting, pocket matching games*

Kindergarten: *worksheets, teacher made books, flannelboard cut outs, center activities, mentor teacher bulletin suggestions, 20 years of files;math and readiness games, art activities, growing healthy project; math, growing healthy, games, puzzles, clay; art and craft activities, AIMS science projects, Box it/Bag it Math games/Flannel stories, Math Their Way math games; papers for each child to practice printing his/her name, papers for each child to practice writing numbers 1-10 and capital and small letters;centers;puppets, monthly and weekly units, science activities, social studies units; graphs, poems in pocket chart, art; homework kits; calendar, charts; dittos for reinforcement; measuring tapes, sticks, balance; magnetic board manipulatives, flags, animals, pocket chart stories; readiness activities; make lots of books together about sounds, numbers, etc., cook, make puppets - students are involved in the making but activities are teacher created*

1st Grade: *Math Their Way calendar ideas, Work Jobs; math games, geometry puzzles; question/answer booklets, activities from board, class books to read; storywriting activities; craft type activities related to units, weaving, building simple machines; card games, bingo, lotto, puppets;listening post, literature study activities, books, cooperative learning activities; laminated task cards for patterning, tangrams, collections of natural objects for exploration(seeds, cones, leaves, seashells), individualized activities materials;math and readiness games, flannel board stories; charts; vocabulary and phonics games, chalkboard activities; learning center materials; art projects,, poetry, development of class stories, hand plays, mental math, etc.*

16. Do you use commercially made manipulatives in your classroom? yes; no; comments

Preschool: *Yes 13;* *No 0*
Kindergarten: *Yes 28* *No 0*
1st grade: *Yes 29* *No 0*

Comments: ***Preschool****: puzzles, seriation activities, counters, duplos, legos, crystal climbers, magnastix are typical;unifix cubes, constructo straws, found items too like poker chips, bottle caps, stones, shells, for sorting, counting, classifying, pretending and creating; blocks, bristle blocks, star builder, little people, cars, trucks, playhouse items, colored beads, etc;large selection of materials used for shapes, counting, perception, language activities; bingo, lotto games, beads and puzzles; colored blocks, Mr. Potato Head, etc.; more open ended materials; art materials*

Kindergarten*: art materials, math manipulatives, games, puzzles; unifix, tiles, pattern blocks, frogs, bears, dinosaurs; Math Their Way materials, constructs, masters of universe, my little pony, small blocks, big blocks, super blocks, bristle blocks, puppets; lots of them; math; math, language, motor skills (large and small); as provided by the district; games of all types;puzzles; hands on manipulatives; mosaics, inch cubes, pegs small and jumbo, counters; lacing cards, legos, dominoes, a lot accumulated in 27 years of teaching; sequence cards, versa-tiles, DLM kit, etc.; usually are more durable, however pieces become lost and are difficult to replace. Need an on-going budget for new and replacement items of teacher's choice*

1st Grade*: Recreational - legos, waffle blocks, lincoln logs, gear sets; math manipulatives for Addison Wesley; calculators, in class computer; Creative publications, DMP materials;pattern blocks, base 10 blocks, tangrams;easier than making your own;unifix cubes, blocks; AIMS (teacher bought); bear counters, tangram puzzles; reading puzzles, picture puzzles, child size chalk boards; flannelboard materials, games clocks; I have used my own money for years to buy them - now the district has bought some; expensive and difficult to replace*

17. How do you adapt your program for special needs students (i.e., learning disabled, slow learners, gifted, language and culturally diverse, physically handicapped? Please list strategies you use(for instance, modify environment, provide individualized help):
    All three levels: *ELA support, individual help, lots of contact with parents, free time use, pull out programs, enrichment activities, aides, homogeneous grouping, open ended math games, parent help, modified assignments, individualized, small groups, peer tutors, cross-age tutors, modified lessons, heterogeneous teams, special buddies*

18. Have you completed any early childhood/child development courses? yes; no; Comment (Number of units, types of classes, etc.):
    Preschool: *Yes 12; No 1; Comments: Years ago; 62/41 units;12+ units child development; children's center permit = 24 units minimum; 6 units; motor development, motor learning, advanced Piaget, child psychology, elementary reading, mainstreaming; A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education (24 units) plus 15 more units in ECE/CD; 30 units; 9.5 units in ECE plus Montessori training and Continuing ed classes for no credit: Raising Emotionally Healthy Children and Gesell Institute courses, two years of inservice training plus workshops in High/Scope; courses for k-8 credential; coursework for special ed. credential, elementary credential, attend workshops and conferences, one year inservice training plus workshops High/Scope*
    Kindergarten: *Yes 20; No 5 No response 3 Comments: Many classes for many years;B.S. Home Ec. plus summer session and extension courses in ECE atleast 15 units above B.S.; 9 units plus working on Masters in ECE; college education in ECE plus many workshops and conferences on this level; it has been awhile but perhaps 12 units; child development minor; developmental psychology 1 - 3: infancy through adolescence, adapting EC curriculum for children with special needs (3 units);can't recall specifics; psychology minor so child psychology, graduate work in counseling; probably 12 units; taken 45 units in the last 4 years geared to K, K-3 teachers; 6 units; kindergarten conferences;major in ECE, don't recall taking any new courses since new information has been available; literature, language development, math manipulatives, growing healthy - 20 - 25 units?*
    1st Grade: *Yes 21 No 3 No response 5 Comments: Not recently; I don't remember; as part of my credential; child development (3 units), child psychology (5 units); 54 units ECE - West Valley, S.J.S.U., U.C.S.C.;child growth and development; Fresno State - Early Childhood Education (3 units); during student teaching - (6 units); child psychology, music for children, storytelling (9 units); child development (psychology);*

6 units - S.J.S.U.; my credential was ECE - many courses since; music, art, psychology, home, community, administration - about 15 semester credits; Don't remember - on file in office; Taught preschool 4's for 15 years; Childhood Behavior Disorders (3 units) and Psychology of Learning (3 units); No. California Kindergarten Conference, poetry for preschool and up; California Teaching credential

19. Would you be interested in staff development in:

Child growth and development   Latest research and trends
Classroom environments   Alternative teaching strategies/models
Other

Child Development: *Preschool 6; Kdg. 14; 1st 8*
Latest research/trends: *Preschool 8; Kdg 15; 1st 11*
Classroom Environments: *Preschool 7; Kdg. 12; 1st 17*
Altern. Teaching Strat./Models: *Preschool 9; Kdg. 11; 1st 12*
Other: *Retention - when?, Cooperative learning, classroom visits to other classrooms 2, student problem solving techniques, techniques for monitoring small groups, individuals working on own assignments, ways to evaluate and provide for special needs, behavior modification for young children, learning centers 4, ways of motivating children to solve their own problems, Math Their Way*

20. Do you have a budget allotment for your classroom? Yes; no

a. Amount per classroom per year; b. Where do these monies come from? (i.e., school budget, PTA, lottery funds, grants, fundraisers)

Yes: *Preschool 9; Kdg. 21; 1st 19*
No: *Preschool 2 Kdg. 6; 1st 10*
Not applicable: *Preschool 1*

a. Amount: *Preschool $100 - $150; Kdg. $50 - $200; 1st $50 - $500*
b. Sources of monies: *school budget, fundraisers, PTA, SIP funds, grants, state funds, school budget, lottery funds, principal, teacher fund raiser, personal teacher funds - one teacher spends $3,000 of own money each year*

21. What assessment techniques do you use?

CTBS   Teacher Observation   District Competency tests
IDT   Teacher designed competency instrument   Other

CTBS: *Preschool - 0; Kdg. - 13; 1st - 20*
IDT: *Preschool - 7; Kdg. - 2; 1st - 1*
Teacher Observ.: *Preschool - 8; Kdg. - 13; 1st - 26*
Dist. Comp.: *Preschool - 0; Kdg. - 10; 1st - 21*
Teacher Designed: *Preschool - 0; Kdg. - 9; 1st - 8*

Other: *Lippincott, September (Kdg) 2; Parent observation (preschool) 1; Betty Caldwell cooperative preschool checksheet (preschool) 2; ESL (1st) 1; Holt (1st) 1*

22. How do you involve parents?

Volunteers parepare classroom materials at home
Classroom volunteer time working directly with students; materials preparation
Field trips
Classroom parties
Specific activities for parents to do with their children
Other

Field Trips: *Preschool - 8; Kdg. - 26; 1st - 27*
Class volunteer: *Preschool - 4; Kdg* ***with students:****27;* ***with materials:*** *14; 1st - 16*
Class parties: *Preschool - 6; Kdg. - 14 1st - 11*
Specific Activities:*Preschool - 6; Kdg. - 22; 1st - 12*
Prepare Class Materials at Home:*Preschool - 0; Kdg. - 13; 1st - 9*
Other: *Parents usng own expertise as a resource, parents as speakers about own culture, homework, newsletter, learning centers, trips to park, correcting papers, helping special children*
Comment: *No extra pay for training and supervising parents*

23. Do you provide resources for parents?

Community resource information
Curricular information
Parenting Skills materials
Book corner
Newsletters
Parent meetings
Other

Community resource information: *Pre 11; Kdg. 16; 1st 11*
Curricular information: *Pre. 4; Kdg. 16; 1st 13*
Parenting Skills materials: *Pre. 7; Kdg. 16; 1st 10*
Book Corner *Preschool 2; Kdg. 10; 1st 5*
Parent Meetings *Preschool 9; Kdg. 15; 1st 15*
Newsletters*: Preschool 9; Kdg. 21; 1st 17*
Other: *Telephone conferences, parent classes at our school, notes home, copies of articles, discussions, first day meeting, back to school night, social events at the school, weekly progress notes, available after school to parents*

24. Please include a weekly time schedule (Lesson plan form) or sketch one out:

See attachments

25. Do you feel your curriculum alignment provides smooth transitions between: preschool and kindergarten; kindergarten and first grade?
Comments:

Preschool to Kindergarten: ***Preschool:*** *Yes 9; No 1*
Kindergarten: *Yes 20; So-so 1;*
Sometimes 1 O.K. I guess 1;
No 3
1st grade: *Yes 7; N/A 3*

Kindergarten to first grade: ***Preschool:*** *Yes 1; No 9*
Kindergarten: *Yes 18; Guarded Yes 1;*
Not really 1; No 5
1st grade: *Yes 21; No 3; N/A 2*

Comments: Some of our preschoolers will not be prepared in the basic ABC recognition, math skills because we do not emphasize these skills; very seldom do you find a child that has had preschool repeating kindergarten; we do a lot of pre-Kindergarten readiness work, i. e., work on shapes, colors, ABC's pencil work, build self-esteem. I've tried to make it so; have done quite a bit of research in ECE in the past two years and provided most of my own curriculum activities

Yes, we talk things over and district competencies are my guidelines; yes, but if we are to "back up", 1st grade teachers need to come with us on the developmental level. We have no control over preschool as it is private with parents making choices for their children. I think their should be more open communication between kindergarten and first. Depends on the preschool; I hope so although we must be more structured as we don't have compulsory participation of parents as they do. We need more aide time to assist us in the classroom;first grade expectations are like night and day from kindergarten expectations.I'm concerned about expectations of parents and of first grade teachers. I feel that the first grades begin structured academics (workbooks, worksheets, etc.) too soon. The first grades at my school are far too academic, in my opinion. I work hard so that my kindergarten students love school without being pushed, pushed. Yes, but not enough helpers as preschool can count on.

Teachers constantly work to facilitate these transitions, both k/1 and 1/2 through out the year. the expectation of district and state for first grade is very academic; yes, these children (preschool/ kdg.) are in the same room at the center, however, formal Kdg. class is a surprise and shock to students. Kdgs. move to 1st grade classroom over the summer; they are integrated with second and third grades. I would like to meet with kindergarten teachers to learn what the students have learned in kindergarten/junior first in terms of the children and transitioning the children has been a key focus. 1st to second yes as I articulate weekly as well as monthly with second grades. At the center, our emphasis is *more on social-emotional development, responsibility, good listening, language skills, and reinforcing classroom curriculum. Yes, but I feel it could be so much better. I feel in many cases we expect too much too soon from kids who just aren't ready. Kindergarten is academically demanding.*

26. Do you feel the need for more articulation with the grade below and the grade above? Yes; No; If yes, please explain:

Preschool: *Yes 9; No 4*
Kindergarten: *Yes 15; No 9*
1st grade: *Yes 16; No 13*

Explanations: How prepared do preschoolers need to be and in what areas? I would like to hear from the kdg. teachers exactly how to help our preschoolers and kdgs. In special ed, yes I do. I don't actually know what is expected in kindergarten; I have never seen their math or reading comps. It would help in planning and implementing our program. More articulation with kindergarten teachers. This would provide a smoother transition for the children and their parents. Perhaps kindergarten readiness would be less of an issue and we would have more understanding of the particular developmental needs of young children 4 and 5 years old.

We are doing it informally. As kindergarten teachers, we need to be aware of the things that would be helpful for first grade success. They need to be aware of the Kdg. problems. It would be beneficial to share and discuss with the preschool teachers, other kdg. teachers on staff and first grade teachers.

Grade above - first grade teachers appear to expect too much academics in kindergarten; they want the children coming into first grade reading and writing. I don't want simply to get together; we need curricular changes and expectations spelled out. Especially first grade - I feel that in order to get through all the curriculum, they're fitting the child to the curriculum instead of the opposite; they feel pressured to get through all of the reading books, etc. so they delve into it the first week of school. Primary alignment in regard to academic expectations and philosophy are critical. The grade below; I feel I need more information in Sept. Yes, I have it with first grade, none with preschool.

It would help greatly to align units of study and to know specifics about what the next teacher expects. Need time for more talk - mostly done now on lunch time. Just feel we need to be more aware of expectations and achievements and discuss plans together. We have little contact with our Kindergarten teachers; they pretty much stick to themselves. Particularly, in view of the bilingual component of my class - we need to clearly articulate the % of primary language instruction in core subject areas for each grade level.

We need time for staff to meet. I would like to be invited to kindergarten teacher s' meetings. Also the preschool teachers should be able to meet with the kindergarten teachers.

27. What would you like to see happen as a result of this early childhood effort?

I would like to see a curriculum, continuum, from preschool - first. Perhaps then we could look more closely at children who might be at risk, educationally or otherwise. The working together toward the children's best interest. Early detection of children with special needs, smooth transition into kindergarten. More parent help in the classrooms; more sharing of ideas and information; maybe some peer tutoring with kids; more acceptance of children - not your kids or my kids but more our kids; more fun put back into kindergarten; I feel there are many parents out there struggling with little parenting skills. I wish we could reach them and help their children in the process. I would like to see the children educated in what is developmentally appropriate for them. I see too much paper and pencil and homework for kindergarteners - ugh! There are many facets of a child that need to be explored. Hopefully, more hands on and exploration will be available for young children.

Working closer with the classroom teachers. An improvement in all programs and more consistency between/among programs.
Have each grade level be more accountable for specific skills - students' learning continues to develop instead of repeating skills. Smaller class size so quality learning and teaching can take place. More education (inservice) on what young children really need and some funds to re-establish developmental materials. More defined goals for kindergarten. Greater articulation between K and 1st. A decision on an agreeable and effective evaluation tool. Reduction in class size k and 1st. Entry age for Kdg. 5.0 by Sept. 1; staff development in early childhood/child development for teachers k - 1st. A k and 1st curriculum that develops appropriate skills based on early childhood research. If that was the case, then entry age would n't be so important.

Smaller classes; elimination of formal testing. Less emphasis on skill mastery and more on the joy of learning and on social skills development; more hands on activities and in the arts. Less formal instruction, more thematic teaching. A more beneficial blending of the primary and preschool grades. Need to develop specific guidelines for curriculum in the primary grades. I would like to see the district give some good workshops for our level and see less book work and less emphasis on the academics in kindergarten. An effort to structure our district's early childhood education like the Task Force recommendations and the How Kids Learn (Newsweek). I feel there's a lot of talk about it and not much support or action for this type of thinking. A change in the attitudes of many administrators on how children learn. More articulation between K and 1st at each school and a change of some teachers' expectations and understanding of children and what is best for them.

I would like to see the CTBS eliminated at the Kdg. level. I would like to see less back to basics for all primary children and more concentration on fostering a love of learning. More staff development please.

No more workbooks - give us alternatives to them; smaller class size. More training (for teachers) in physical and motor development of a child and ideas for P.E.

Staff development geared toward special needs. Release first grade from CTBS requirements so first grade can continue the developmental process. Develop standardized training of teachers of preschool through 1st grade. Child Development programs in the district able to participate in services K-12 receives for children and for staff development.

I would like to see more communication among staff about what goes on in their classrooms. I would like the preschool - 1st program to be more cohesive with common goals and more clearly defined objectives for each grade level.

I would like to set up my classroom with learning centers and learn how to manage their use

Never ever have a kindergarten/first grade combination. It has been a horrible, unfair experience for everyone involved; children, I don't feel, noticed or were deprived of education, but I know how things could have been different; can't do everything and do justice to both grades.

Get rid of testing young children with CTBS or other such tests. Take the performance pressures off the children; educate parents about letting children be children.

Continue good positive programs, with a big emphasis on self-esteem, as that, to me, is the basis of how children achieve, or if they achieve. Have available all services for preschool and children centers that are available to K-12, psychological especially.

More communication among Kindergarten teachers in our district, sharing, supporting and learning together continuing to grow and be always more effective teachers.

I'd like to see happier, smarter, less stressed children who get a great foundation in all areas, especially literature and math.

Provide a smoother transition from early childhood to kindergarten.

Meetings with first and preschool teachers; No CTBS - no testing formally; more paid aide time.

Less academic assessment in Kindergarten.

I would like to have the district support a staggered program for kindergarten. Currently, I have 19 in the morning group and 9 in the late group. It would be so much more beneficial for the children to have 15 and 14 students in each group. I also feel the late group should be able to have lunch at school. Not only would this help the childrenn, but it would allow the kindergarten teachers to interact more with the other primary grade teachers during their lunch.

Less academics for the Kindergarten level. The four year old child really struggles to cope even with no pressure. Less academic assessment in Kindergarten. More classroom aide time; smaller classes.

I'd like to see more developmentally appropriate classrooms for young children · more hands-on, experiential-based, concrete learning. Children need nurturing environments where they can be active learners, initiators in the learning process and opportunities to become more independent.

Am always eager to get new ideas, know what others do that works. My goal is to teach the hearing impaired preschoolers to communicate through speech and to use their hearing to the best of their ability. I try to do this and provide a developmentally appropriate experiential environment.

Preschool would be preschool, kindergarten would be kindergarten not Jr. College.

More money alotted for age appropriate furniture. Time to visit and share with other afternoon program teachers (or morning where appropriate).

Understand that six year olds are expected to put in too long a day. Too many academics are expected of them. More keeps getting added and takes away from the arts, music, and language and sharing time needed to nurture children of this age. Not enough time is given for them to mature naturally. I would like to see better programs for our early childhood children.

APPENDIX B

ARTICULATED CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ACE) PILOT EVALUATION INTERVIEW

Interviewees: *Two Site coordinators, Two Grant Project coordinators- (one a participating teacher)* Date: *Summer 1990*
School Site:*Three of Four Ace Pilot sites*
Interviewer: *Early Childhood Chairperson*

* *

1. How many teachers participated in the ACE pilot meetings at your school site? *21 (four of three sites)* ; preschool *7;* kindergarten *9;* first grade *5;* anyone else? *first grade teacher who began and then was transferred to second grade, three principals, speech therapist, two special project facilitators*
2. How often did you meet? *monthly to every six weeks*

3. Did you have a regular meeting format? If so, please describe:

- *Informal discussion*
- *Welcoming, sharing information from Early Childhood Committee, discussed curriculum for which we were given staff development*
- *Began with sharing, had a topic for meeting, planned subsequent agendas, talked about individual children*
- *Met with site coordinators regularly to discuss site meetings and staff development offerings*

4. What did you discuss at your articulation meetings?

See #3

5. What do you feel were the strengths of the ACE pilot meetings at your site?

- *Getting teachers talking to each other*
- *Appreciated the training*
- *Getting people together who work with the same children*
- *Curriculum worked on together and an awareness of what early childhood is and that we do need to talk*
- *Pinpointed there is a need to work together especially on curriculum and testing.*
- *Information provided jointly for preschool, kindergarten and first grade teachers*
- *Mainly getting familiar with each other; building bridges with the elementary school and the preschool; as time went on had feeling all were striving for same things, more unity and common direction*

6. What do you feel were the weaknesses of the ACE pilot meetings at your site?

- *Hard to find time to meet because of schedule conflicts*
- *Lack of total commitment of participants/school site*
- *Teachers did not really want to get together -- wanted to keep separate*
- *Negativity of some participants*
- *Some complaints about the Math Their Way trainer*
- *Scheduling of meeting times*

7. Do you feel staff at all three grade levels had equal status with the group during meetings? yes______ no______
Comments:
   - *At one site, four yes, two no*
   - *Yes*
   - *Generally yes*
   - *At our school, yes; no one grade level dominated*
   - *Kindergarten perhaps had a stronger position because it was the grade in the middle*

8. Do you feel staff in the ACE pilot had equal status even though they had different experience levels, i.e., veteran teachers and teachers with less than three years experience?
   - *Yes. Sure; young teachers have a lot to offer*
   - *Pretty equal; some give and take*
   - *Yes*
   - *Equal status at larger meetings*

9. What has your principal indicated about his/her feelings concerning the pilot articulation group?
   - *Very good first step; wished we'd had more of a product; has positive feelings*
   - *Nothing directly; believes in it but has not spoken about pilot*
   - *Really didn't think it would make a difference; wasn't really for it although did speak to individuals to participate and encouraged everyone*

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the articulation?
    - *Provide specific early childhood resource people, experts, for content training in group skills, community people and district resource people*
    - *More regular meetings -- gets hard as school year goes on and also hard to find a quiet meeting place*
    - *Within the year, share actual activities to use with kids, demonstrate*
    - *Need to know more why we need to pull together -- provide an orientation*
    - *Provide basic foundation time to be together -- more opportunities to socialize and get together*
    - *More interactions, more sharing; need to develop confidence in one another and in working together*
    - *Start with preschool and kindergarten; add first the following year*

11. Is there anything else which would be important to know about your ACE pilot site level meeting group?
    - *Some people said critical things*
    - *We really enjoyed most of the staff development*

APPENDIX C

PRACTICUM IMPLEMENTATION CALENDAR

Activity	Scheduled Completion Date	
	Original Plan	Adapted Plan
• Contact administrators, site and district level for permission to complete practicum; solicit involvement, provide an abstract of project, describing who, what, why, when, where, and how.	Completed	November 27
• Develop survey instrument.	August 25	August 25
• Gather and prepare materials for staff development in group process skills.	August 25	November 27
• Administer the pre- assessment; inservice preschool through first grade teachers	August 29	December 5
• Meet with principals of identified sites to schedule articulation group follow-up meetings.	Mid-September	Not workable
• Meet with articulation coordinators to set agendas, plan meetings.	September - December	Not workable
• Attend and facilitate articulation meetings.	Sept. - Dec.	Not workable
• Mid-practicum report completed.	November 2	February 16
• Encourage articulation groups to prepare a management presentation for principal and anyone else group and principal designate.	November - mid-December	Not workable
• School closed for vacation - two weeks.		mid-December to January
• Hold any management presentations.	Early January	Not workable
• Invite all participants to share management presentations with each other's sites at joint presentation time.	Early January	Not workable
• Interview participating school principals.	----	March 8, March 28
• Administer post assessment.	Early January	March 8 - April 12
• Analyze data, pre and post surveys; complete practicum.	Mid- January	May 3
• Analyze principal interviews	----	May 1

APPENDIX D

Pre-Training Survey

Please take a moment to answer some questions which will help your presenter focus the training provided.

1. Have you had specific training in any of the following group decision making skills? *Please check below all the skills for which you have had training:*

______Brainstorming

______Typing of problems

______Prioritizing

______Coming to consensus

______Data gathering

______Cause and effect diagrams

______Nominal group technique

______Force Field Analysis

______Management presentations

2. Do you currently meet across grade levels, preschool through first grade, to coordinate, plan, or discuss program continuity for children?
yes________ no________

3. What do you find most difficult about attending and participating in meetings? *Please explain:*

4. What do you see at this time as some of the roadblocks to articulation, preschool through first grade, to plan for program continuity for children? *Please explain:*

5. What are your expectations for group decision making skills training today? *Please explain:*

Your Grade Level________________

Thanks for your time!

10/90

Post-Training Survey

Please take a moment to answer some questions which will help your presenter evaluate the training which has been provided.

1. Have you had specific training in any of the following group decision making skills? *Please check below all the skills for which you have had training:*

______Brainstorming

______Typing of problems

______Prioritizing

______Coming to consensus

______Data gathering

______Cause and effect diagrams

______Nominal group technique

______Force Field Analysis

______Management presentations

2. Do you currently meet across grade levels, preschool through first grade, to coordinate, plan, or discuss program continuity for children?
yes________ no_________

3. Since the training was provided, have you noticed an improvement in the meetings in which you participate?
yes_____ no______;*Please describe:*

4. Do you feel you now have some tools to attack some of the roadblocks to articulation,preschool through first grade, to plan for program continuity for children?
yes______ *no______; Please describe:*

5. How and where will you use your new group decision making skills you have learned? *Please describe:*

Your Grade Level________________

Thanks for your time!

10/90

APPENDIX F

Post-Training Interview of Principals Form

1. What changes in preschool - first grade staff do you see regarding articulation for planning, coordinating efforts, socializing, communicating, etc.?

2. What feedback about the training did you receive from staff?

3. Have you noted any changes in your regular staff meetings regarding participation, ownership, meeting skills in the preschool - first grade staff?

4. Do you see a benefit for your staff having participated in the training?

5. Are there any follow-up activities for which you can see a need that could be provided?

6. Any further comments about this project?

School site_____________________ Date_____________

APPENDIX G

DECISION MAKING SKILL BUILDING FOR TEAMS: AGENDA, TRAINING ACTIVITY, LIST OF HANDOUTS

DECISION MAKING SKILL BUILDING FOR TEAMS

Preschool, Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers

Wednesday, December 5, 1990
Adult Education Center, Room 15, 2:00- 4:30pm

A project to expand skills for articulation to increase program continuity

AGENDA

Pre-training survey

Introductions

Expectations

General Overview

Two Heads Are Better than One

Group Process Skills

Brainstorming
Prioritizing
Consensus

Data Gathering

Management Presentations

Wrap Up

Next Steps:

Early Childhood Education: We're All in This Together

Please spend a few minutes getting to know a colleague who:

__________ 1. Plays a musical instrument

__________ 2. Speaks more than one language

__________ 3. Likes classical music

__________ 4. Has taught preschool, kindergarten and first grade

__________ 5. Knows how to tell jokes

__________ 6. Has a hobby that is shared with his/her students

__________ 7. Enjoys travel

__________ 8. Is planning a special activity for the holidays

Did you discover something new about colleagues?

TRAINING HANDOUTS
DECISION MAKING SKILL BUILDING FOR TEAMS

1. Specific Group Decision Making Skills
    - Rules for Brainstorming
    - Problem Identification
    - Criteria for a Problem Statement
    - Problem Solving Steps
    - Consensus Decision Making
    - Giving Feedback
    - Preparing for a Presentation
    - Management Presentations
2. Better Meetings
    - How to Keep Communications Open
    - Don't Hold a Meeting If . . .
    - Ten Points for Good Listening
    - Roles of Meeting Participants
    - Criteria for Effective Meetings
    - Improve Your Communications by Not Making Assumptions
    - Ideas for Effective Teams
    - Problems Before and During Meetings
3. Activities to Challenge Old Ways of Thinking
    - Get Out of the Rut
    - These Stop Your Creativity

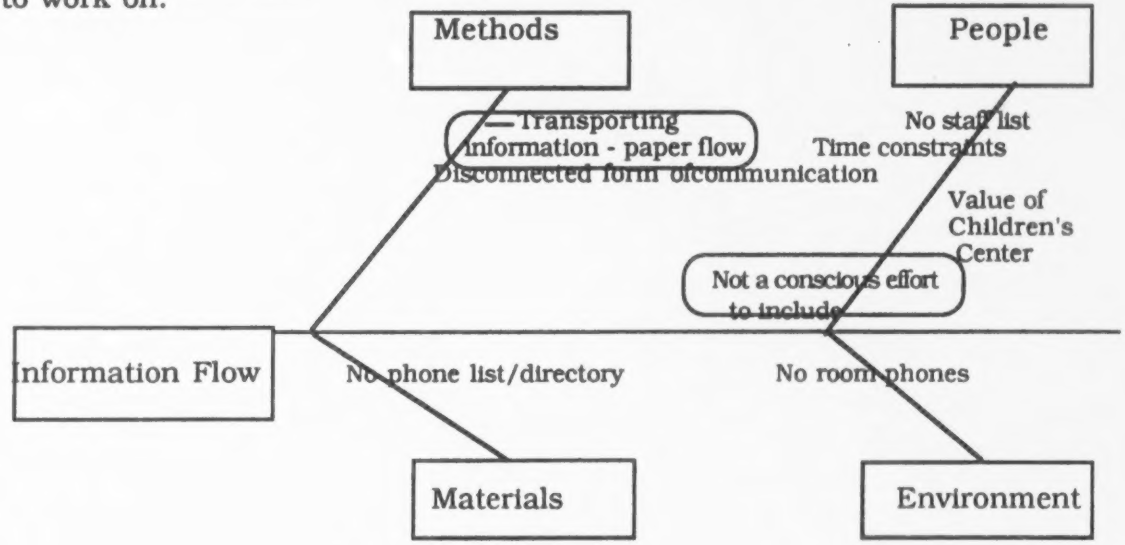
APPENDIX H
BARRIERS TO ARTICULATION BRAINSTORMS

BARRIERS TO ARTICULATION

Brainstorm I - Group Decisionmaking Skills for Teams
December 5, 1990

1. ~~Time without children~~
II 2. Energy - Being fresh 1
I 3. Reluctance
4. ~~Curriculum areas PreK vs 1st, etc.~~
I 5. Unclear if all have common goal 1
III 6. Budget restraints
I,II 7. Problems expressed, not solved (round and round)
I 8.(and 4) No clearly defined curriculum for preschool, kindergarten, first 3
I,II 9. Talk about problem children - not whole group
I,II 10. Role and what happens daily in preschool and K classroom 3
I,II 11. Not working for common goal - Division 1
II 12. ~~Perception of pre K and elementary teachers~~
I,II 13. Negativity - Communication from 1st to preschool teachers is of negative behavior
I 14. Background on children from preschool to kindergarten teacher 1
I 15. Lack of daily contact center teachers to elementary teachers 2
II,III 16. ~~Separate buildings/ people = division~~
II 17. ~~Meetings to establish consistency in working with children~~
III 18. ~~Common children with 2 staffs and different leadership~~
II 19. (and 1) ~~Time and place for all involved to meet~~
I 20. General communication 6

General communication was divided into smaller bites through discussion and information flow selected as a segment of general communication to work on.



Methods
People
Transporting information - paper flow
Disconnected form ofcommunication
No staff list
Time constraints
Value of Children's Center
Not a conscious effort to include
Information Flow
No phone list/directory
No room phones
Materials
Environment

Brainstorm 2 - Barriers to Articulation

1. ~~Different time schedules~~
I 2. Lack of identified problems 1
I 3. The amount of people being involved at one time
I 4. Not having prioritized problems
5. ~~No time available - need release time~~
I 6. Not always a place
7. ~~Lack of money to pay for release time~~
8. ~~Respect for each other's level of knowledge~~
II,III 9. The amount of problem students 1
I 10. Not having a set concept of what is to be covered each year on the continuum from preschool through 12th grade 5

I 11. The concept of the C.C. is not perceived accurately
I 12. The daily routine and experiences of the children need to be addressed both at school and at the Center 3
I 13. Meeting place needs to be quiet and convenient
I 14. Analysis of the need to articulate 1
I,II 15. Not enough awareness or agreement on what is appropriate behavior and learning for each age level 7
16. ~~Administrative officials still pushing for more testing rather than following the task Force's recommendation of appropriate teaching to the child~~
17. ~~Inappropriate expectations are being pushed down. The developmental level is not considered as important as it should be.~~
18. ~~They expect five year olds to do too much~~
19. ~~Regarding neurological development and sensory motor skills: doesn't match the demands being made by the administration~~
II 20. (and 1, 5, 7)Time and money 6
II,III 21. Substitutes for C.C. unavailable 2
II 22. (and 16,23,24,25,26) Administration/People in control don't value ECE 5
23. ~~Decisions re. budgeting and appropriation of funds do not reflect a consideration of available human and intellectual resources that would benefit all aspects of ECE~~
24. ~~Administration does not support in money and personnel good programs for ECE~~
25. ~~"Forked tongue" of administration~~

26. ~~A district wide financial support of ECE - instead of lots of little programs (separate) have one program from preschool to high school~~
I 27. Preschool, K, 1st grade teachers need to realize and accept our commonalities rather than "fighting" separately 5

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APPENDIX I

PRACTICUM I IMPLEMENTATION LOG

Date	Activity
8/14/90	Proposal sent off
8/15/90	Elementary Ed. Curriculum Directorcalled about planned inservice Aug. 29; informed inservice day plans have changed and my workshop (first step in implementation) cancelled. Scheduled appointment with Director to secure his help in going back to the drawing board for implementation
8/16/90	Met with Director to give him a copy of proposal and to find out what would help to get buy-in for implementation at this point. He said to prepare a district proposal which he can take to the District Management Retreat next week and use to talk it up to principals. Met with the Associate Superintendent of the District since the new Superintendent would or could not meet with me to enlist his support for the practicum implementation. He received a copy of the Nova proposal and we discussed what I needed which was his positive support with principals at the Management Retreat since I do not attend that function. He said he would support.
8/17/90	Received verbal go ahead on practicum from advisor; paperwork to follow.
8/28/90	Did a group process skill training somewhat similar to what I had planned for the practicum for compensatory ed. special project facilitators. I told then how I was trying to provide training to preschool, kindergarten and first grade teachers also and could use their help if they were pleased with the training with convincing their principals that I be allowed to provide training with their teachers. Some verbal support.

9/4/90	Spoke to Director and to Associate Superintendent to see what interest and or support they had been able to drum up at the retreat. They each gave me a list which included the four pilot school sites for our efforts the past year and three additional sites. They named Principal at School A and Principal at School B as definitely supportive and suggested I call the following principals: School C; School D; School E; School F ;and replacement principal for retiring one yet to be determined at School G.
9/4/90- 9/28/90	Contacted above named principals. School A definite yes, but wanted teacher involvement in decision; various stages of interest in the rest; they were interested but not sure about teachers who would need to be involved in the process. Principal from School E invited me to make a presentation to staff meeting. Elementary Curriculum Director announced as new principal at School G ; he told me when he got his feet wet he would push for involvement. All felt an October training too soon.
9/14/90-10/10/90	Worked on pre and post training surveys for practicum. Called Practicum Advisor to run some ideas by her to make sure I was on the right track.
10/3/90	Presentation to "E" Elementary staff about practicum project. Passed out a district proposal form(one sheet) explaining programs and a list of typical skills to be part of the training. Answered questions. Seemed to be some interest but staff burdened with current tasks so no commitment.
10/15/90	Shipped off samples of pre and post survey forms developed to Practicum Advisor. She sent back comments sheet that okay but I'd evidently sent her one of the first drafts of the pre so the question order was different. Have since corrected.
10/23/90	"A" school contact, lead teacher,committed School A to the project. In speaking to teacher we set training to happen on December 5 to allow time to get through parent-teacher conferences at the school and to give me time to see if any of the remaining schools would be participating.

11/7/90	Received phone call from principal, School E saying his staff was just too busy to participate at this time;the same afternoon received a phone call from principal, School D stating his school would not be participating.
11/8/90	Saw principal School B and principal School F at another meeting and both said they were interested in their schools participating. I asked for definite answer and numbers by Dec. 1.
11/21/90	At principal School G's request, I gave a presentation to his staff about the practicum. He gave a public endorsement and left it up to the teachers to let him know.
11/27/90	School G teachers and School A teachers for sure will be participating in the group decision making skills training scheduled for December 5, 1990, 2-4:30pm. Called principal School F to see if his staff would be participating. He said he had asked them to call me directly, but no nobody has called.
11/29/90	Duplicated off the materials for 12/5/ 90 training. Looks like we will have approximately 20 -30 participants. Called School B to see about school's participation.
12/5/90	Presented workshop to 12 participants from two schools. Had participants complete pre-training survey and workshop was well received. Some interesting happenings included teachers from the same school, preschool and first grade who did not know each other; teachers who spontaneously came up with solutions for problem situations dealing with communication; one teacher who said, "It isn't really a matter of money or wanting someone else to do something, I can take the initiative to make things better." One principal has invited me to work with her whole school staff to facilitate their handling a big problem in February. As well received as this workshop was, there was not a lot of interest in having me come to facilitate regular meetings. Teachers seemed inundated and hated the idea of one more thing. I will give them a month, call the principals to see how the ideas are taking root.

The brainstorm we did to develop the skills was very well received as a topic, "Barriers to Articulation". I had one of my staff come in to facilitate one group and I facilitated the other. Participants were grouped at random so the two schools were mixed. Both groups moved from pointing the finger at the "they" and time and money as the solutions to ideas over which they had control and which would not be too difficult to implement.

12/13/90 Received a request, actually two requests, from outside of the district for group process training and/or facilitation to two colleagues of a district employee who knew I was working on this as part of my practicum and who had shared the idea at a graduate school administration class at the local university. She had shared the plan for enabling teachers to have skills to deal with program continuity and school based management issues. I was unable to schedule myself for the needs of the callers but referred one to a staff person and the other to a consulting group near her town.

1/10/91 Received phone call from one of the teachers trained asking for support in working with other kindergarten teachers in district grade level group to work on getting district administration to buy in to supporting developmentally appropriate practices.

1/11/91 Spoke to both principals to see about setting up a meeting to discuss progress at their school. Both said they wouldn't have a minute until February. Since it doesn't look likely I will be able to do the regular facilitation I had planned to do, I will develop a set of questions to ask the principals about any responses the teachers have taken to the brainstorming session and questions about teachers use of learned skills in the past month and a half.

My plan for the completion of the practicum will be to schedule a meeting at each school site and give a post training survey to each of the original participants. This data plus the interviews of principals and the actual results of the training day should give me relevant data to complete my practicum.

2/12/91	Presentation to the School Board on the Early Childhood Committee's Recommendations for the District regarding Early Childhood Education. The Board was complimentary to me and the committee members I involved in the presentation; however, I felt that there were other issues of priority for the Board and perhaps District Administrators so that the report would be shelved and not incorporated into planning. It was most disappointing after two years of work and told me the district climate was less responsive now for the type of project selected for practicum even though the rhetoric supports school based decision-making. The lesson for me is to do a much better job of securing a wider-ranging buy-in for future projects and to be flexible enough to make a shift in projects if necessary. Under different circumstances, I would set aside a project, move on to others, and continue to explore the political climate to identify the more appropriate time for the original project.
2/25 - 3/28/91	Called principals (kept missing each other) to set up appointments to interview them as to their response to how staff may be behaving differently or expressing ideas which refect more support for articulation, communication across grade levels, more engaged at meetings, etc. Will give principals post training surveys to be completed by staff and returned to me by April 10, 1991 (or thereabouts).
2/27/91	Sent away for some resources from ERIC Clearinghouse for Educational Management related to practicum topic.
3/8/91	Interviewed principal, School G.
3/12/91 - 4/10/91	Completed participants' surveys returned.
3/15/91	Received ERIC Clearinghouse materials. Some of them look quite good. Will make one last run to the library after all interviews and surveys complete.
3/28/91	Interviewed principal, School A.

3/30/91	Began reviewing Practicum Handbook to get sense of what next phase of activities would include. Reviewed survey and interview data received to this point. Looked at references beside the *APA Manual* for ideas for ways to present the data.
4/3/91	Although I have been attending meetings and speaking of this project on numerous occasions to many school administrators, since the arrival of the new superintendent, all school administrators seem to be too busy to commit to one more thing or perhaps fearful. I will have to see what happens over time with the new superintendent, his agendas for the district and with the principals, which retire which grow and develop under the new and different leadership, how the new replacement principals are.